The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

David H. C. Read:

Supremacy of the Gospel

Edgar N. Jackson	•	The *Via Dolorosa*
Henry Kuizenga	•	On the Credit Side
Donald W. Morgan	•	The Good in Good Friday
Frederick H. Haag	•	Reversed Pharisaism
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Wayne Dehoney	•	The Robe

ROGER HAZELTON and ORVA LEE ICE

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In this Issue —

ROGER HAZELTON is Abbot Professor of Christian Theology in the Andover Newton Theological School where he has been a faculty member since 1945. An ordained Congregational minister, he spent one year as a parish minister, then turned to the academic field. Dr. Hazelton is active in professional organizations and his interest in ecumenical affairs antedates his attendance at the first assembly of the World Council of Churches. His fifth book, *God's Way with Men,* will be published early in the fall by Abingdon.

DAVID H. C. READ preached his sermon, "Supremacy of the Gospel," early this year on his first Sunday as pastor of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York city. Successor to Dr. George A. Buttrick in the New York pulpit, Dr. Read had been chaplain of the University of Edinburgh since 1949. In 1952 he was honored by appointment as chaplain to Queen Elizabeth in Scotland. The previous year he gave the Warrack Lectures on preaching. He had also lectured in Canada, Australia and the United States prior to accepting the New York call. His books include *The Christian Faith,* published last month by Scribners, and *Prisoners' Quest,* which grew out of his five years' experience as a prisoner of war in Germany.

EDGAR N. JACKSON, whose sermon, "The *Via Dolorosa,*" appears in this issue, is the author of a new Abingdon book, *How to Preach to People's Needs.* Both in his parish, the Methodist Church of Mamaroneck, N. Y., and in the psychiatric clinic which he heads, Mr. Jackson's special concern is psychological insight. His ministry has included two years as Air Force chaplain in addition to nearly a quarter century in the New York East Conference of the Methodist Church.

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ROSS M. WILLIS has been minister of the Jeffersontown Christian Church, in the suburb of Louisville, Ky., since November 1952. He is a graduate of Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio, and the College of the Bible in Lexington, Ky.

ORVA LEE ICE has been minister for 10 years of Calvary Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Prior to that he held pastorates in Kalamazoo, Buffalo, Washington, D. C., New York city and Pittsburgh. During his 13 years in Pittsburgh he became widely known for his weekly radio programs. His latest book, *A Candle for the Dark,* was published last fall by Abingdon.

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Credo:

CREDO is perhaps too special a name to give the simple remarks which are slated for the page is month. But it just happens that Credo fits atly into the title space usually occupied by emo. And besides, what I want to talk about is the editorial policy of The Pulpit: what standards are used in the selection of manuscripts, what I believe the paper can be.

Note that "I believe"? So tortuously is Credo stified!) I'm sure that most of you, one time or nother, have wondered what on earth could have en in the editor's mind when he picked this or hat. Let me try to tell you.

First, his mind definitely was on earth when he lected the manuscripts for this or any issue. hat is, while he has a very lively notion of a heology and a church structure which he hopes ould honor God, square with the truth, and serve en—he also has a very lively notion of just how any other convictions are abroad, with equal ght and with equal force. Which means that while e operates on earth, and as a Protestant Christian, e can defend his convictions with all vigor but e may not force them upon anyone or anything—ven a magazine. Which means that though his heological leaning will probably become clear from he nature of many of his selections, he will be doing is level best at all times to give every defensible nade of Christian opinion a place in the journal.

This single standard of nonexclusive diversity ets up a whole row of other standards. If we try ot to set patterns for preachers, but to serve reachers in their diverse patterns—if we try by ur selections to let preachers witness to each ther across the many fences of contemporary rotestantism—then the editor must read manuscripts with many other criteria in mind than general excellence.

THEOLOGY has already been mentioned as an element to be taken into editorial consideration. Categories are usually unfair when dealing with people, and no one is comfortable in a pigeonhole. But there are differences of attitude and method in heology, and these differences come through in ermons. Care must be taken in selection that no alid and responsible theological line be crowded ut. Conservatives, liberals, conservative-liberals nd liberal-conservatives ought all to speak in these ages. Dearly would we love it, too, if the speaking rought response from readers.

Denominational considerations enter here, too. Although they are not the same as the theological considerations. Today, by and large, theologies create differences within denominations rather than being the difference between denominations. There are conservative Presbyterians and liberal Presbyterians and New Reformation Presbyterians, and all within the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. And so it is with all other denominations—even those which till now have seemed theologically monolithic. This means that theological spread in our offerings will not assure denominational spread. We could give you sermons covering the whole theological spectrum, and they could all be from the same church. So we must select manuscripts with an eye to denominational variety.

SECTIONALISM is another element the editor must recall. Over a single year, north, south, east, west, midwest, Canada and most of the continents ought to be represented by sermons, maybe not in strict equality, but at least in reasonable parity. Age is another consideration. The generations should be speaking to each other here. Maturity and youth must be in general balance. Sermons by ministers whose names alone certify their excellence are necessary, and so are the sermons of men whose fame may be as local as a single parish. Sermons for urban, suburban, rurban, exurban and rural congregations ought all to have place here. Neither professors nor preachers ought to overbalance the other. Special day sermons must not overwhelm regular Sunday preaching.

And along with all those general considerations there is the overriding requirement of helpfulness to the parish minister. Is the theme suggestive? Are illustrations fresh? Is an overlooked aspect of the gospel accented? Is the style interesting? Pretty formidable, isn't it? I don't know whether I'd have moved in here if Id known all this.

Anyway, though, now you know what we're looking for. You and your best. And now you know how many neutral reasons there are for your sermon's coming back—if it does. And since no one should be offended when rejection can be on so many respectable counts, maybe I can with better conscience return some moldering manuscripts. Now if you know how happy I'll be with all your contributions, and if I can know how unphased you'll be by an occasional return of same (since my multi-faceted judging obviously implies no judgment!), we're in business.

T. A. G.

By Roger Hazelton

PERIL OF HANDLING

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God. II Samuel 6: 1-8.

WE ministers spend lots of time looking for texts that speak to the condition of other people, but here is one that speaks to us. In fact, it speaks so loudly, so insistently, that we cannot fail to hear it. For this text is concerned with one of our own most common and constant dangers; it is about the peril of handling holy things. It brings us up short with the truth that contact with the holy may break a man as well as bless him; and that is something which no servant of the most high God is ever at liberty to forget.

Now holiness is not an idea which we can comfortably define, and we do not experience it as merely the confirmation and heightening of what we know and feel already, and on other grounds, about God. There is always that in holiness which stands over against our life no less than satisfying it. Encounter with the holy God is the very gist and kernel of our Christian faith; but it can take the shape of a shattering, invading Presence quite as much as that of a healing, gracious one. Think, for example, of Pascal, man of the world, scientific genius, eloquent interpreter of human wretchedness and grandeur, who was called to such a meeting. This is how he pictured it: "From about half past ten in the evening until about half past twelve—FIRE. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob." Yes, our God is a consuming fire; he cannot be counted on simply to raise our natural endowments to a higher power; he may have to burn us, break us open, if we are to be remade. Alway remember this: God, being God, does not belon to us, nor is he in our keeping; we are in his keep ing, because we belong to him.

Sovereign Sufficiency

I find a most instructive difference between th older and the more recent commentators on thi incident reported in the second book of Samue The older writers felt they had to apologize for th story and if possible to explain it away. It seeme to them that God was put in an unfavorable light punishing excessively and cruelly what was afte all a perfectly laudable action. Of late, however scholars have been more willing to see in the in cident a graphic illustration of the sovereign suf ficiency of God. And let me add that we have no gotten beyond that thought when we leave the Old Testament for the New. There, too, God's love is holy love that sends a shudder up and down the soul. The ancient hymn still holds:

> Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
> And with fear and trembling stand;
> Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
> For with blessing in his hand,
> Christ our God to earth descendeth,
> Our full homage to demand.

My sermon has already made its point, I trust, but it will have to be spelled out and brought home a bit more fully. What are some of the dangers faced in being men of God, and how shall we avoid them? I suggest we think of them in connection with the two aspects of holiness on which our whole ministry depends, the holy as power and as perfection.

First, holiness means power. God has his center of gravity in himself. He wills and works by his own leave and right, not ours. Indeed, it is by his initiative and prerogative that we are allowed to exist at all. By his calling, recalling and manifold renewed recallings we are brought within the orbit of his mighty purpose. And this means that we are stewards of a mystery, not just purveyors and retailers of it. What goes on in church is only the tribute of the current to the source; only obedience, receptiveness and follow-through; only response to stimulus. True, this power, thank God, also works in us, yet it is not ours to give or take but God's.

All too often we ignore this, or behave as if we did. How much, I wonder, of the busy-work which the world calls religious—the run-around of planning and programming, the activism for which our

HOLY THINGS

hurches have become notorious—how much of all his is in fact much ado about nothing? Perhaps it s even worse; it may be, this activism, no more han patronizing God. Indeed, I believe it is pre-isely that. I recall hearing Will Herberg say once hat most ministers, priests and rabbis of his ac-uaintance were either "word-mongerers" or "sacra-ient-operators." That is, they had confused being od's servants with being his salesmen. Here is a eril which is easier by far to notice than to avoid, ut it can only be avoided if it has first been no-iced. The sin of Uzzah, who meant well enough ut should have known better, was that of sup-osing he was a prop on which God had to lean or support. The truth, however, is just the other way around. God is our stay, enduring through-ut all generations, and it is he who steadies us when we are in danger of stumbling and falling. "If," said old John Newton, "you think you see the ark of God tottering, you can be quite sure that it is due to a swimming in your own head."*

No, we ministers are but the instruments on which God plays his music. We are the anvils on which he hammers out the shape of his oncoming Kingdom. We are the earthen vessels lifted up to hold his heavenly treasure. That is what it means to be a man of God. We are called upon to be co-workers with God, not in the sense of doing what God cannot do without us, but in the sense of doing what we cannot do without God. All things are pos-sible with God—even the good we are able to do for him. If you or I would know the power of the holy stirring and shepherding every step of life, we must begin by letting God be God, by holding ourselves open, viable, and usable by him.

Sharing His Perfection

But holiness is also perfection; that is the second point. You remember of course those words of Paul: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's temple is holy, and that temple you are." We are chosen out of the world, to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. In the Old Testa-ment, God alone and the things of God are spoken of as holy. But in the New, it is precisely Christians who are most often called holy, *hagioi*, saints. They are those who do more than channel God's power: they share wondrously in his perfection.

But how do we do this? There are only two kinds of men, said Pascal: the righteous who believe themselves sinners, and the sinners who believe themselves righteous. Jesus said the same thing more emphatically and with better right. The holy ones are also the lowly ones. They have learned, in John Owen's words, "how to grow tall by stooping." They have long since given up all striving for status, all self-importance, all pushing and crowding for recognition.

Why must we in the Christian ministry tell our-selves this over and over again? Because our very office in the church makes it difficult to realize and accept. Every visit takes on the nature of a public appearance; we are usually "up front," being looked at or listened to, and that is not good for the state of our souls. Have you ever noticed how many seminary students tend to change within a few short years from college boys to parsons? Very soon the slow paralysis of surprise sets in, and they be-come more and more ponderous, preoccupied and professional. Oliver Powell likes to tell a story about Dr. Fosdick's preaching class in Union Seminary. Ordinarily, after a student finished his sermon, Dr. Fosdick would ask the class, "Now what shall we say to Mr. So-and-so?" But one day the sermon was preached by one of those boys who had learned too fast and too well; his words came out resonant, unctuous and bland. Afterwards, Dr. Fosdick, who was usually so sympathetic and considerate, said with some anger, "So long as you are in this class, Mr. Jones, don't palm off any of that holy blah on us again." As a matter of fact, there is nothing holy about a performance like that. It is the opposite of everything that the holy means. It only cheapens that which men and women ought to cherish. There is indeed a casualness in ministerial piety which might more accurately be termed profanity, and every one of us needs to be on constant guard against it.

The Good Shepherd

Not by presuming to possess some secret superi-ority bestowed by God, but only by utter meekness of heart, drastic humility of mind, and absolute receptivity of spirit, can we become and remain truly holy men.

> For thus says the high and lofty One
> who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
> "I dwell in the high and holy place,
> and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit,
> to revive the spirit of the humble,
> and to revive the heart of the contrite."

It takes a genuine worshiper to lead others in worship. He who dares to preach the word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, must first have heard that word himself. The best shepherd is he who knows his own Shepherd. All down the line, the rule holds good. And when it is obeyed, God be-comes to us no more the angry Other but the loving Thou, whose holiness empowers us and makes us sharers in a great and perfect gift. Then, through the grace of Christ and the fellowship of his Holy Spirit, we receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation, unto whom belongs all glory and all praise.

*A. J. Gossip, *The Hero in Thy Soul* (New York: Scribners, 1929), p. 234.

Love Is the Very Heart of God's Good News

Supremacy of the Gospel

By David H. C. Read

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith. Romans 1:16.

I COME to you as a minister of the gospel of Christ—and, like Paul, I am not ashamed of it. This church, not only in its Sunday worship but in every one of its multitude of activities, exists to serve the gospel of Christ. For a Christian church cannot be built on an idea or a passing enthusiasm; still less can it be built on a minister, or group of ministers; but only on the gospel of Christ. "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." It is because I know that those who preceded me as preaching ministers in this church—George Arthur Buttrick and Henry Sloane Coffin, and those who were before them—were servants of the gospel of Christ that I am not ashamed to stand before you as their successor. No man will ever trip gaily up the steps of a pulpit if he stops for a moment to think what he is daring to do (and this pulpit might give the boldest pause). The only confidence a preacher can have is not in his words, his gifts or his personality, but in the gospel that has been entrusted to him.

But why should St. Paul, or anyone else, ever imagine that one could be ashamed of the gospel? When we think of the mighty regiment of Christian churches met for worship today, of the advance of the gospel into every corner of the inhabited earth, of this enduring gospel straddling two thousand years of human history, of the church ecumenical—the only human fellowship that surmounts the barriers and penetrates the curtains of our divided world—then we find it hard to think why anyone should dream of being ashamed. But there are other moments—and we all know them—when the picture is not quite so quickening and convincing. When we are away from the atmosphere of worship and prayer, when we are on our own in the world of Monday morning, when we are listening to the news of world events, when we are in the company of gay and unbelieving friends, when we are absorbing books and articles soaked in a pagan skepticism, when the material world gets a grip on our souls—then haven't we all known what it is, even although we might not admit it even to ourselves, to be ashamed of the gospel?

Amazing Promise

For, don't let us make any mistake, this gospel must often seem a foolish and fragile thing. What is it, after all? Good news all right, but good news of what? Simply the story of a life lived and a death died in an obscure corner of the early Roman Empire, through which, it is declared, God has brought a deliverance from sin, from evil and from death. Do you see how the gospel is a tremendous promise for mankind, based on what looks like the slenderest evidence? That there is a God in control—that's great news. That he is concerned about us all—that's even better. That his love is stronger than all the forces of evil—that is best of all. And that he is able to supply all our needs in this world and the next—what more could we want? But how does the gospel offer us this amazing promise? In the story of a good and simple life lived out against the ordinary skies of the Middle East in a political situation as tense as today's; and in the story of a maneuvered execution which somehow was not the end.

Have you never felt, if only God had made this promise in some clear and unmistakable act? If perhaps he had waited until radio and television had let him speak to the entire world in tones of thunder? If he had placed his Christ on the throne of Caesar, or let him come today to set up a world government of infallible goodness and power? But what have we got? A gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, unrecognized save for a handful of working men. This is the way God's news breaks upon the world, for the heart of the gospel is not power but love—a love which will not force our allegiance or impose upon our wills, but which waits, waits, waits for a true response.

Temporary Triumph

We cannot really be surprised that a Paul—eager, impatient, aflame with the glory of God—should sometimes have been tempted to be ashamed of this gospel. As he padded over the dusty roads of Asia Minor and watched a Roman legion passing in all the panoply of Imperial Rome he must on occasion have wished that his Lord was enthroned in Rome and "millions at his bidding sped." Surely God's promise could have been delivered in the points of a thousand spears and his Christ given dictatorial powers. Again, when Paul found himself back in the academic surroundings of his youth, listening to the clever talk of the philosophers of Greece, or the skillful theologizing of the rabbis, he must have felt at times almost ashamed to begin to speak about a man who died and rose again. This was "a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles." I believe that all this was very real to the apostle. He was no fanatic or bigot but a cultured, sensitive man of the widest education. And yet, was

ne ever really ashamed? Every story from the Book f the Acts, every line of his letters proves the basic ruth of his assertion to the Romans. "I am not"—epeat *not*—"ashamed of the gospel." For Paul saw hrough the temporary triumph of Roman power, nd he reached deeper than the utmost realms of hilosophy. He saw, and he knew, that this weak nd helpless gospel was God's patient method of riumphant love, and that the frail body of men nd women who were its custodians, made up the hurch against which the gates of hell would not revail.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel." This kind of onviction is born in us by an act of faith, but it is n experience that we prove its truth. We cannot ive on a secondhand experience, even if the first-and be Paul's. So perhaps you will allow me to peak of two periods in my own life when I have known what was meant by the "foolishness" of the gospel and through that experience have come to understand its utter supremacy.

Modern Paganism

The first is symbolized for me by an incident about half an hour after I was captured by the German Army in June 1940. A crowd of young Nazis, the elite of Rommel's victorious Panzer corps, surrounded me on the cliff tops in northern France. Learning that I spoke German, they began to ask questions. "How long will this war last?" asked one of them. "Years and years," I replied. There was a roar of laughter as they flung their hands out in the direction of the British Isles just a few miles over the Channel. "*Funfzehn tage*—fifteen days—England *kaput!*" I managed to restrain myself from saying, "You mean England *and Scotland kaput*," but tried not to look impressed. Yet the indications were the blackest. This was modern paganism rampant and triumphant.

And a few days later, on the march with a column of prisoners stretching for miles into the horizon, I was singled out by a passing Nazi who spotted my dog collar. Without malice or undue roughness he calmly informed me that my day—the day of the Christian church—was over. "It is a new world," he said, "*our* world." Yes; over against the forces of paganism when they are massed for attack—whether in a hot or a cold war—the Christian gospel seems a flimsy formula. And yet, have we not all seen time and again in history the mightiest powers collapsing, even as five years later I watched that same Nazi machine break in utter ruin before my eyes? But I did not need to wait for better days of the war. Throughout that time—week by week, year by year—my conviction grew that God's love in Christ is stronger than any material power. And so, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

Changing Intellectual Climate

The other experience is of a different kind. For the last six years I have been chaplain to the University of Edinburgh. There was no tradition of chaplaincy work at Edinburgh and I had to make my way as best I could among students and staff—the representative of the gospel of Christ. Anyone who knows the academic setup in any part of the world knows that anyone with a religious conviction has either got to tuck it away for Sundays only, or else be prepared to argue it through with all comers. And today, although the swing of the pendulum is now well over to the religious side in many universities, there is still a formidable opposition to be met. There are times when any believing Christian feels that the big guns are out and trained against him and he begins to wonder how this fragile story of the New Testament will stand up. I cannot give any details this morning, but I can say this: that over these years I have become more and more convinced of the astonishing supremacy of the gospel in the intellectual as well as the political and social spheres. Let them all come—scientific humanism, marxism, logical positivism, behaviorism—"I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."

Twenty years ago many intellectuals were ready to dig the grave of Christianity as a live option on the campus, and among students the Christian case often went by default. Yet there were always those who remained unashamed of the gospel and realized its continued relevance throughout the changing intellectual climate. And now the tide is turning. Perhaps the most significant event in the student world since the war—and I have noted it here, in Canada, in Great Britain, in France, Germany and in Australia—is the return of the Christian faith to the center of debate, and of Christian worship as an integral part of the university life.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel . . ." Whatever doubts or fears we may ever have about this strange and fragile message of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ are swept away when we get life into perspective, and cease to be dazzled by passing political storms and intellectual fashions. This gospel is supreme, not because it is now backed by a massive organization of churches spread across the world, and not because it can be successfully defended against rival systems of thought, but because as the aspostle says, "*It is the power of God for salvation.*"

The Divine Dynamic

Friends, if there is one human need greater than any other it is for "the power of God for salvation"—that is, the divine dynamic that takes us as we are and moves us, individually and collectively, towards the good and perfect life that God has planned for successful living; it is not a blueprint for immediate solution to social problems; it is not a moral code to which we are bound in allegiance; it is a divine power that meets us at the point of our sin and helplessness and lifts us up towards the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This is the message of which we are not ashamed: that in this world, where we are daily exposed to all kinds of forces and pressures that make for discord, despondency and defeat, there is a silent, invisible power of God flowing to us through Jesus Christ that is able to cleanse, to heal, to reconcile

and to bring us through every trial and suffering, even through the last enemy stronghold which is death itself, to the Kingdom where God's will is perfectly fulfilled.

Outside this church this morning a wind is blowing. Far out on the Atlantic it is screaming through the rigging of the ships; in the harbor it is rippling the water and fluttering the flags; and through Manhattan it is gently swirling round corners and lifting the dust. You can't see it; you can't catch it and put it in a test tube. But you see the results. "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; *so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.*" This gospel of the grace of God in Christ is like that. It is invisible, unanalyzable, intangible, but throughout the world we see it at work—the "power of God for salvation to every one who has faith." Yes, there is nothing automatic about this power of God. From the beginning it is there, not as a demand but as an invitation, "to every one who has faith." But just as the wind will find the tiniest sail set on the ocean and begin to move the little craft, so this great dynamic of God will infallibly find the least motion of our faith.

It is for this that the church exists: that we may together, in prayer, in worship and in Christian service, lift that sail of faith and catch that great wind of God's sovereign love to us in Christ. Therefore, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."

A Quiet Upper Room

By John E. Berger

Messiah Lutheran Church, Newton Falls, Ohio

Preached during Holy Week 1955 in the chapel of Wittenberg College

DURING Lent, as we remember Christ's passion and emphasize the physical pain of his sacrifice, we must never forget the mental agony which he endured also. For years "mental cruelty" was not taken very seriously because of the term's lax use in divorce proceedings, but in recent years we have learned its real meaning from communism's brainwashed victims. For Jesus, the physical pain was on Calvary; the mental agony was in the quiet upper room.

First there was his dread of the cross. By this time Jesus was well aware that he would be beaten, spit upon, humiliated and crucified. He was willing to endure all this, but he dreaded it. I am sure each of you knows the anxiety that precedes a crisis—those last ten minutes of cramming before a particularly difficult examination, or the waiting before the announcement of the winners of a contest in which you have a personal interest. Whatever the cause, every one of you at some time has felt that churning in the pit of the stomach which says that you are scared. I understand that even some of the bravest men are sick before they go into battle. Jesus was willing to die on the cross, but the waiting . . . It is no wonder that in the garden of Gethsemane, after he left the quiet upper room, Jesus prayed, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Then Jesus suffered the mental cruelty of knowing that he would be betrayed by one of the twelve. At the Last Supper, when Jesus declared that he would be betrayed, the disciples were amazed, and they asked, "Is it I? Is it I?" Nobody suspected Judas. I am sure that at one time he was a fine man—one in whom Jesus had complete confidence. In our own country's history, we find that Benedict Arnold, the traitor of the American Revolution, had a fine record. He was one of General Washington's most brilliant and highly trusted officers. When Arnold betrayed the American army, he struck a blow at Washington's confidence in the whole Revolutionary cause. "Whom can I trust?" he said. So it must have been with Jesus and Judas. Here was a man whom Jesus had chosen to be a disciple, to learn the way to the kingdom of heaven and to spread the gospel to all the world. Here was a man who had been sufficiently trusted by the whole group of disciples to be elected their treasurer. Yet this same man betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. This mental cruelty Jesus had to endure in the quiet upper room.

Then there was Peter, who said that he would go to prison or die for Jesus—Peter, of whom Jesus had once said, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." Yet Jesus knew, there in the quiet upper room, that this "rock" would deny three times that he even knew his Master—just to save his own miserable neck. Jesus knew what Peter would do, and Jesus suffered.

Finally there was Jesus' mother. She was not in the quiet upper room, but she must have been in Jesus' thoughts. He knew that Mary would see her Son hanging on the cross; he knew that this sight would pierce her heart just as the nails would pierce his hands and feet. He knew, and he suffered in the quiet upper room.

Here was Jesus' suffering, even before he faced Pontius Pilate. The agony which Jesus endured was for your sins and mine. Because of this suffering we know that we have a Lord who understands our troubles and helps us.

Jesus Introduced a Revolutionary Way of Mastery over Suffering

The *Via Dolorosa*

By Edgar N. Jackson

"Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves." Luke 23:28.

SOONER or later every one of us must come to grips with the problem of suffering. So much suffering seems to be a part of human experience that we must develop the resources for mastering it or it may master us. We may readily accept the cause-effect relation that follows sinful action, but it is more difficult for us to deal with the evident injustice and tragic consequences of the suffering of the innocent which seems to have no valid reason.

Mankind has long struggled with this problem and has come up with a variety of answers. The philosopher tries to rationalize suffering, and the hedonist tries to escape it. The cynic sneers at both life and its suffering while the religious person faces suffering and tries to use it creatively even if he cannot explain it.

'Born to Trouble'

It was a philosopher who said, "To those who think, life is comedy; to those who feel, life is tragedy." Buddha indicated that existence and suffering are one and the same thing. The writer of the Book of Job says,

> "For affliction does not come from the dust,
> nor does trouble sprout from the ground;
> but man is born to trouble
> as the sparks fly upward."

When Jesus moved from his trial to his execution those who lined the *Via Dolorosa* wept, and he rebuked them saying, "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves." He had clear enough understanding of his suffering to know it was not nearly as tragic as the abject suffering of those who suffered with no purpose. His purpose was clear, so the cross was not tragedy but triumph. Those who wept saw nothing but the tragedy and were overcome by it. That was tragedy indeed.

Jesus lived in a world where suffering was rampant. There was unbridled sadism and cruelty. Authority was administered with brutality and fear was considered an adequate tool of control. Government was insensitive to the needs of individuals and, because there was no semblance of democratic control, there was widespread irresponsibility with resultant suffering, injustice and poverty.

It was a world where anesthesia was unknown and physical suffering had to be accepted in the raw for there was no other way. Inadequate understanding led men to false concepts of illness as a form of punishment, and the diseases of the emotions were treated as if they were criminal behavior. Steeped in ignorance, fear and superstition, men had difficulty in developing a structure of right relations between cause and effect, illness and suffering, tragedy and triumph. Tradition equated illness with divine disfavor, and providence with divine blessing. It was not until Jesus uttered his skeptical judgments on the values of the past that there was any revision of this thinking.

Revolutionary Doctrine

At three definite points Jesus rejected the judgments of the past in relation to suffering. When questioned by his followers, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me." Sin is ruled out as the only cause of calamity. The healing, fulfilling, creative power is the power of health and proper function and right relations. Speaking of man's innocent involvement in cause-effect relationships, Jesus answered the disciples who thought Pilate had punished the more wicked by saying, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans . . ? I tell you, No . . . Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell . . . do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No." Here in the first few verses of Luke 13, Jesus points out that the calamities that come from man and nature do not prove that people who suffer are sinful. This was a revolutionary idea. It was contrary to the thinking of the day, yet it has become the basis for the whole structure of the healing arts. Therapy, sympathy, kindness and a helpful attitude toward the misfortunes that are so much a part of the life of mankind are dependent upon the acceptance of this new and far-reaching idea of Jesus.

It is difficult for us to grasp the implications of such a revolutionary doctrine in our world with its highly developed medical practice and its care for the sick and suffering. Try to imagine the attitude that would reject all of this as a violation of the will of God, an interference with the divine plan of the universe. A physician would be chief of sinners, the compassionate would be suspect, and the sufferer would merely be getting his just deserts.

Let us be clear at this point. There is no effort in the words of Jesus to deny the nature of a cause-effect relationship at work in the universe. Man brings upon himself much of his suffering by not doing the good he knows. But if he were able to live up to the full measure of his understanding of righteousness, there would be much suffering left that is not determined by his being good or bad, wise or foolish, worthy or unworthy. There are important natural factors to which man must adjust. The rain falls "on the just and the unjust." Luke 21 outlines these factors at work in life to cause suffering without regard to guilt or innocence.

First Step Toward Understanding

Many suffer as a result of false religious teaching. The innocent bear much of the burden of war and conflict in human society. Hurricanes, earthquakes and other physical calamities strike without regard for the convenience of man or the situation of the innocent. Physical illness and the infirmities of age are visited on men without consideration of quality of character. Economic distress brings suffering to good and bad alike. Man's inhumanity to man starts chain reactions that reach far beyond those who are at first involved. The misuse of power by irresponsible authority places staggering burdens on the innocent. The trials of home life bring heartache and suffering to many. Those who accept the insights of high religion often suffer persecution because of their devotion to principle. We do not have time to elaborate on these forces at work in life but you sense the reach and burden of such suffering by merely mentioning it. Suffice it to say that with the clear recognition of these forces at work in life, with no regard for what we consider moral selection, we have made a clear step forward in the human struggle against suffering. A clear distinction is often the important first step toward understanding.

Men have had difficulty keeping these revolutionary ideas clear in their minds through the centuries. The Puritans reverted to a similar type of thinking in their belief that virtue was rewarded with prosperity while evil was revealed through poverty. Within the last century efforts have been made to prevent the use of anesthetics because it would deny man the chastening benefits of suffering. Even now there are those who would through the use of outworn religious concepts prevent the easing of mental suffering. But by and large men have come to accept the idea that there is a large amount of suffering that is not related to any moral problem. It is due to man's finiteness, the limits of his understanding of the universe and the quality of his creaturehood. He may seek to relieve and limit this suffering, but he is under no sense of guilt for it himself, nor has he a right to pass an unfavorable judgment on others because of it.

Paradoxies of Our Age

How, then, does this bring us to face the matter of suffering in our own paradoxical age? Our age is the most brutal in human history. We have witnessed more unnecessary destruction of human life and more unreasonable suffering inflicted on innocent persons in the past two generations than ever before in human history. Perhaps our feelings are not so depraved, but our equipment for implementing our feelings is greater than ever before. By a show of hands in a legislative hall we can determine whether or not millions of innocent persons will suffer hunger. At the urging of an unbalanced demagogue the lives of millions are destroyed. We do not like to pass such a judgment on the day in which we live, but we cannot change the arithmetic nor deny the facts of recent history.

Yet this is also the age that has given expression to more humanitarian effort than any other. This is an era of widespread philanthropy, compassion and concern. We have invested our time and energy and our means in an unrelenting struggle against the physical forms of suffering. We have advanced the healing arts to relieve the sufferers. We have organized societies to express a special concern for nearly every part of the human anatomy. Our strange power of group destructiveness on the one hand is balanced by a deep concern and passionate desire to help the sufferer on the other. That fact alone can give a clue to the uncertainty and confusion that exist, for by this bifurcation at the level of action we have done irreparable damage to our feeling capacity. We limit the areas of acute physical suffering through medical science at the same time that we extend physical suffering through military science. Is it any wonder that we have increased the areas of psychological and spiritual suffering to an all-time high? Is it any wonder that our age will probably come to be known as the era of the great heartache?

We Need a Releasing Faith

How do we face this matter of the great paradox of our age? How do we react to the emotional confusion caused by the compulsive control of life by a destructive force so great that we cannot seem to master it? Do we feel guilty about it and so add to our other burdens an unbearable sense of guilt, or do we try to move beyond the dilemma through creative action? It would be an evidence of a group neurosis to assume a guilt for which there is no clear responsibility. The sane and healthy attitude would be to move ahead to a large enough world view to give us a point of focus well beyond the confusion created by our dilemma.

Our great tragedy is that we have too small a religion, too small an ideal to which to devote ourselves. We have not even grown to the place where we will accept the universality taught by Jesus that would remove all of the artificial barriers men build between themselves. These artificial boundaries create infinite suffering. We have not been willing to admit the religious errors that merely fortify our injurious judgments. We have hoped for some kind of a miracle to resolve our problems when we had the resources within ourselves but failed to use them. Rather than move back toward a crippling guilt we need to move ahead to a releasing faith.

The adequacy of a world view gives men a larger and more adequate purpose for living. The women

who wept by the *Via Dolorosa* wept superficial tears for a small purpose. They saw a man suffering and their emotions were touched. Jesus saw their small purpose and the small faith behind it and was aware of the deeper tragedy. He suffered with a purpose and his suffering found a meaningful context. They suffered for no great purpose so their suffering was sheer, undiluted agony with no fact in human experience to relieve it.

Inadequate Ways of Approach

The human mind has the resources to project a faith adequate to sustain it no matter what the nature of suffering may be, but these resources are not found in philosophy. Philosophy seeks reasons and an ordered plan for man's existence. Much suffering is unreasoned and unreasonable, clear injustice and beyond man's responsibility. Unless he has more than philosophy can offer he cannot handle it. Science seeks control, but the very act of extending control in some directions limits it in others. Even the scientist needs something far more satisfying than his science. Jesus gave religious insight. He did not try to explain suffering, much less explain it away. He recognized it, faced it squarely, and urged men to have a large enough view of life to fit the suffering into its proper place and use it creatively. He was reasonable as far as reason went. Then he urged a world view adequate to sustain the best pragmatic efforts of men.

We can illustrate several levels of approach to this matter of suffering. The Buddhists and Christian Scientists with an inadequate world view try to fit all suffering into a false category and call it error. They would deny the validity of any such experience of creative suffering as the cross. With a small world view focused about their own small problems they would try to bend reality to fit their own small needs and their distorted reality concept.

The Stoic goes one step farther. With "head bloody but unbowed" he grits his teeth and affirms his faith in man's ability to suffer with courage and die with dignity. But there is no purpose in it except to show his inner power over external circumstance.

The creative soul takes his suffering and makes of it a thing of beauty. The growing power, insight and beauty of the symphonies of Beethoven cannot be understood apart from the composer's ability to use the brutal facts of life for creative purposes. He took what life brought, refined it through his creative genius and gave back to the world something infinitely greater. We are all richer because of what he did with his suffering.

Great World View

But there is yet another level. With sensitivity and concern man may move out to accept suffering for a purpose defined by a great world view. We all know of the testimony of a life like Schweitzer's. Probably none of you have heard of the significant life of a young English physician named John Melle. Brilliant in mind, trained with care, skillful in his profession, he was moved by a courageous and selfless spirit. When Mussolini made his brutal attack on the defenseless people of Ethiopia, John Melle was stirred by the injustice of it. He knew of the inadequate medical corps with the Ethiopian army. Without thought for his own welfare he gave up his career in this country, organized a Red Cross unit and moved into the battle area to bring relief from suffering. Through terrible months he served and retreated with the troops toward Addis Ababa. Though he survived the heat of battle he was shot in the back by a crazed native who mistakenly assumed that all white men were like Mussolini. John Melle did not want suffering for himself or for anyone else. He lived his life to relieve suffering. His sudden death had the elements of tragedy, but more for the people of Ethiopia than for himself. Somehow sympathy does not seem an adequate emotion with which to view a life with such spiritual grandeur. Melle feared no suffering but went out to accept it because of a world view that sustained his effort. Any weak sympathy we might express toward him would invite the response, "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves."

Religion makes no effort to explain away the fact of suffering. It seeks to bring relief where possible, but it also looks at life realistically enough to know that large areas of human suffering remain as an irrevocable part of existence itself. It would not merely urge us to stand firm and take suffering with courage. It would indicate a world view, a sense of purpose, so great that we would not shun life for fear of suffering, nor hesitate to suffer for a purpose, but rather, with a full use of the creative genius of the human spirit, would refine suffering until it should become a thing of beauty, an undying testimony to the power of the human spirit.

Symbol of Triumphant Faith

The words, "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves," carry a deep meaning. They invite a comparison of suffering in the lives of those with superficial purpose and in the lives of those with great purpose. Suffering is opportunity as well as calamity for those who see life in large enough terms to use even tragedy creatively. There is no easy answer to the problem of suffering. Those who seek easy answers can only confound themselves and travel at a level of superficiality and illusion. The deepest understanding of the nature of God is revealed to those who with a keen sense of reality look life squarely in the eye and use the resources of their own spirits to make it more abundant.

When all of the genius of man has been employed to relieve suffering, the problem will remain, for it is basic to existence itself. It can make or break a man. An adequate religious faith can become a basis for mastery of self and mastery over the experience of suffering. Such a faith can help a man to use suffering rather than be abused by it. It can enable him to suffer and yet not be destroyed. It can even lead him to suffer in such a way that his suffering becomes a symbol of triumph. When that is done the cross assumes its proper place as a meaningful religious symbol.

The cross as a symbol of triumphant faith is

(Continued on page 14)

On the Credit Side

By Henry Kuizenga

"If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?" Luke 6:33a.

JESUS is assuming, as he asks this question, that he is talking to people who want their lives to show up on the credit side of the ledger when things are totted up by the master Bookkeeper of us all. He is assuming that he is talking to folks who want their lives to sing in harmony with God.

With God who sets no limitation upon the expression of his good will, but makes his rain to fall alike upon the just and the unjust. It is so assuming, and who of us would wish him to assume otherwise about us, that Jesus asks, "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you?"—in terms, that is, of the things that matter to God. But love your enemies, Jesus says, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and selfish.

I

Now, you and I are likely to call this a counsel of perfection and, so doing, to feel justified when we ignore Jesus' advice. We may smile over it and sigh at the beauty of it; we may say it's "too idealistic" and, having done so, feel pretty smug about taking what we call a more practical approach to life. The more practical approach—that means the approach that is easier and more convenient for us. But stop to consider for a moment, will you, what you and I are doing when we forsake the counsel of Jesus to be well disposed toward all men, and when, in the bestowal of our good will, we begin to discriminate between people.

Jesus says that once you abandon God's rule of doing good to all, you immediately lower yourself to the level of the people whom you hate and despise. No use to hate and despise anyone then, for as soon as you do, you yourself become hateful and despicable. Neither will your smiles and good humor toward your friends distinguish you from your enemies, for the people you hate and despise also have their friends whom they favor with their affection. "Even sinners love those who love them." All the good you do to your favorites will not lift you out of the class of those against whom you bear ill will, Jesus says, for even sinners do good to those who show them favor. If, in short, you are going to be sweet and helpful only to those who are sweet and helpful to you, you are no better in that respect than the worst kind of people who also have their pals and sweethearts whom they favor with their love and affection, and shower with gifts and good will.

In other words, says Jesus, once you have drawn a circle for the purpose of limiting the practice of your religious virtues, then no intensity of practice within that circle will avail to distinguish you from any other clique, sect or cult that cuts itself off from the rest of the world to suck its collective spiritual thumb. In the schools this sort of thing is known as group ethics.

I know a story that is told to describe what is meant by group ethics. A young son asked his father one evening: "Daddy, what is ethics?" To illustrate what he could not otherwise define, the father, who happened to be a businessman, told an incident from the day's transactions. "This morning," he related, "a customer made a purchase and overpaid me by ten dollars. Now, this is the ethical question in this situation: Do I tell my partner or don't I?" If you and I confine the practice of our faith to those with whom accidents of birth and geography happen to identify us, then we are guilty of group ethics.

II

But you and I know, and the whole world knows, that game. And there's nothing special about a life lived in that way. Within the approved and acceptable class to which you and I belong, we practice our little niceties of breeding and social intercourse. Like the family estate and the ancestral silver, we bequeath our educational and cultural advantages to the right people living in the right places. We are kind and hospitable among those whose reputation for kindness and hospitality is beyond dispute and who stand in the least need of our kindness and hospitality.

But that's not Christianity. Christianity can include that kind of thing, but cannot be limited by it. The world is full and always has been of exclusive lodges and closed societies, private organizations, esoteric cults, secret fraternities and confidential guilds whose members are as busy keeping the world out as they are tucking themselves in. But that's not Christianity. You can't emblazon your religion with the family coat of arms or stamp it with the exclusive seal of your club or your creed without putting Jesus right out of that religion.

ut the world out of your religion and you put esus out too. Shut yourself snugly into your little rcle with your selected companions, where you n manage things and control the membership cording to your likes and dislikes, and you shut esus right out of your life.

The story is told, facetiously but not without a al point, about a humble person who was con- erted to Christianity and tried to join a church in ne neighborhood. It happened to be a rather fash- nable church where he found it hard to establish friendly relationship. When he would attend hurch, no one would speak to him; no one would nvite him to come back. Being a man of prayer, e told the Lord of his crushing experiences. The ord comforted him and said, "Don't fret, my son. 'or years I've been trying to get into that church nyself."

If you haven't room in your religion for the umblest soul on earth, then you haven't room here for Christ. For Christ came to sell God and God's way to the whole world. And nothing is ac- omplished by you and me on the credit side in his enterprise of Christ's until we take down the "keep out" signs that we've been wearing on our earts, until we stop wasting our energies trying to uild fences around the love which Christ died to nake available to the whole world.

Something of all of this is implied, I think, in Jesus' words, "If you lend to those from whom you ope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again." One time when Jesus was invited to dinner, he said o his host (and I dare say that he said it with a winkle in his eye): "When you give a dinner or a anquet, do not invite your friends or your broth- ers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also nvite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you."

I hope you will not take my citation of these passages from the Bible as indication that I do not like invitations to dinner, nor as indication that I would feel justified in failing to return such favors. But I think that with these statements Jesus is teaching a deep truth about God which we all need to get hold of. Let me illustrate it further.

III

In the September 1950 issue of *Fortune* I once ead an article entitled "Is Anybody Listening?" It was a shrewd appraisal of a current campaign by leaders in American industry to re-sell the sys- em of free enterprise to America. The writers ointed out that the latest techniques, the most xpensive talent, and the costliest advertising space re all being utilized in this campaign, and that in he year 1950 industry spent as much as $100 mil- ion on their advertising budgets alone to try to ell the system of free enterprise to Americans. The vriters described the campaign at some length, then oncluded, and here I quote *Fortune*, "It is not vorth a damn."

Why? For several reasons, the article went on to say. There is a great wall of differences between the leaders of industry who are conducting this sales job and the people whom they are trying to sell. Moreover the salesmen on this job don't understand those differences. They live in their world and never take a mental journey out of it. They pitch their campaign and all its literature for people who think and feel and talk and eat and do all their living the way they themselves do. When they do try anything different, they talk down to the people they are trying to reach.

The result is that the campaign does not go over. Worst of all, many of the campaign's promoters do not know that it is not going over, while those who do know, do not understand why it is failing. They don't see the huge wall inside of which they have enclosed themselves from the rest of us. They don't realize that the same wall which affords seclusion for those within from those without makes impossible any communication between those within and without. The propaganda for the free enterprise system, pitched as it is for the folks inside, never gets over the wall. It bounces back for the consumption of those who don't need it. So in this enterprise there's nothing accomplished on the credit side.

Now the problem with which these *Fortune* writers were dealing is not only a political, sociological and economic one but a spiritual problem as well. Indeed, those same writers so labeled it when they gave as part of their suggestion for the problem's solution these words of Dostoievski in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov:* "If the people around you are spiteful and callous and will not hear you, fall down before them and beg their forgiveness; for in truth you are to blame for their not wanting to hear you."

This advice, good for those who are trying to sell the system of free enterprise to the American people, is doubly applicable to Christian men and women who must sell to the whole world the faith of which the American system of free enterprise is, in some respects at least, an economic and political expression. Which is to say that if we take Christ seriously and if we really believe in democracy, then you and I will get off our high horses to crawl up over or around the barriers that separate us from the people who disagree with us, in order to carry to them the evidence that Jesus was not lying when he said that the gospel means good news for the poor, freedom for the oppressed, education and good health for those in need. We shall carry them such evidence even when they misunderstand, even when they despise us. For if you and I are serious about Christ, then we shall, forgetful of our own dignity, concern ourselves with selling Christ to those who despise him because they despise us.

William Hard, in an article entitled "Manners for Americans" (*Reader's Digest*, Feb. 1954), lists five principles of leadership which we Americans shall have to master before we shall begin to master our new position as world leaders. The fifth principle is the one I want to mention here. It is this: "Get over wanting to be liked." Later he says, "Let us put love of being loved behind us."

This is only to say what Amos and Isaiah knew long before the birth of Jesus, that if we men are to worship the one true God, then we shall have to treat each other as God treats all of us. But God's love is not conditioned upon the expectation of being loved in return. God's love is prompted by the needs of those he loves. He loves not for the sake of being loved in return, but purely for the sake of introducing the loveless and the unlovely to the blessings of love.

Therefore in our faith and by our faith we shall have to destroy the walls which we have been erecting to set limits upon the expression of our good will. We shall have to agree with Robert Frost against his New England neighbors that good fences do not necessarily make good neighbors. We shall have to learn what David learned, and Joseph before him, that God keeps no pets, but loves and forgives us all alike and desires that we shall all love and forgive as he does, making no discrimination.

There is a passage in Matthew which Moffatt in his translation of the New Testament puts this way, "If you only salute your friends, what is special about that?" *Exactly!*

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Prayer

Our God, we acknowledge Thee to be a very special God with a very special Word to us, Jesus Christ Thy Son, our Lord. Help us to become Thy very special people by service to Thee and to all Thy people through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The *Via Dolorosa*

(Continued from page 11)

dependent upon an adequate view of man, as a spiritual being, with a soul responsive to its divine counterpart. Man's mastery over personal suffering is not realized apart from a firm faith in the eternal nature of his spiritual sensitivity. That faith makes his being something more than the sum total of the incidents of life, and guarantees his mastery over that which is truly incidental.

The symbolic nature of the cross is also dependent upon a view of the universe that leads man to reverence the structure of law and order, the working of cause and effect, even where he cannot see that law or cause. He believes that "beyond the dim unknown" there is reason, and that what to his limited mind is injustice and disorder is not the result of a cosmic failure or a malicious force, but is rather the evidence of his own limited capacity to know and judge.

The symbolic nature of the cross is also dependent upon a view of a Creator who cannot be less than that which he has created. The finest outreach of man's nature is in the creative, redeeming, sustaining power of love. As God is love, so man seeks to fulfill in his own being that creative capacity to respond to life even when it does not seem to respond to him. For he lives ultimately not by sight but by faith which is insight.

So the struggle for mastery goes on between the free spirit of man and the often unfriendly circumstance of life itself. The free spirit seeks to be a great spirit. Ultimately the resources for triumph lie within your own soul.

A Prayer for Leaders in the Church

By Fred E. Luchs

Congregational Church, Evanston, Illinois

O THOU who makest the clouds Thy chariots, yet workest with man in his labors; who coverest Thyself with honor and majesty as with a garment, yet forgettest not Thy children—lay Thy hand upon these laymen who have been elected, appointed and called now to lead these people.

Thou hast placed in their hands power; now clothe them mightily with wisdom of mind and love of heart. Grant them patience for the days when we, the people, move too slowly; grant them love for those times when men will mock; grant them faith in themselves when failure stalks their paths; and give them strength when temptation would lure them into the easy way.

Use them as instruments to further Thy ways—ways of pleasantness and of peace, of justice and of brotherhood. Where they find discord, may they leave unity; where they see despair, may they set up hope; where they encounter bitterness, may they sow love; where they meet the darkness of night, may they kindle the radiance of a bright morning star.

And bless us who follow. Make our loyalties strong. Grant us insight to walk behind boldly. Give us a firm step to keep pace with them lest we lose them. Set aside our petty prejudices to keep in step with their vision. And bless us all to do mighty works in Thy name. Amen.

rom the Cross
he Radiance Streaming

What's Good About Good Friday?

By Donald W. Morgan

TODAY, my friends, we gather here in this sacred place to observe Good Friday. Nay more, e come to share with our blessed Savior his dread- il ordeal on the cross. "Good Friday" it has been alled for centuries by Christian folk. Have you ver wondered why; whence this curious name? Good Friday?" Why, we might ask this afternoon, hy is this day, of all days in the Christian year, alled "good"? What's good about Good Friday?

At first glance we see a great deal about it that s evil, nay absolutely vicious. Hardly worthy of uch a name. In the dead of the night, Jesus was rought before the Sanhedrin, that illustrious as- embly of priests and scribes, the most solemn and oly group of men in all Israel. In the dead of the ight, before anything could be done to prepare the lefense of an innocent man, they brought him be- ore the Sanhedrin. And there what a mockery of ustice transpired. Let every Christian stand sol- emnly before the grim account and ponder.

Trumped-Up Charges

Oh, the charges were hurled with great fury: 'Why, this rascal was heard to say, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days.' The temple of God! The temple here in Je- rusalem, the holiest place in all Israel within which he Holy of Holies is housed!" But before that harge—and it was true—our Lord stood silent. Caiaphas then attacked: "What's wrong with you, nan? What have you to say? Is it true you call ourself the Son of God?" And then Jesus spoke, 'You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will ee the Son of man seated at the right hand of God." Blasphemy!" came the reply. "Blasphemy! Proof rom his own mouth!" And the men who were hold- ng him spat upon him—spat, and beat him. And hen they blindfolded him and slapped his face. Prophesy, O prophet! Tell us, who was it who truck you?" Oh, they were having a glorious time! t was a great game! It was a wonderful sport! And his was justice! This inquisition was justice! Then his trial before the Sanhedrin was over, and—since capital punishment was sought—he must now go before the Roman authorities. It was scarcely day- break on Friday. "Good Friday" they call it! What's good about it?

At this point the account contains two pitiful details. These details concern two of Jesus' disci- ples, the highest and the lowest, Peter and Judas. Judas by then was suffering from a spiritual hang- over from his betrayal of the night before. He was filled with remorse. He began to remember that day, long ago, when he first met Jesus, that day when Jesus beckoned him, "Come, follow me." He, like the others, had followed Christ, lived with him, taught with him, dwelt in the presence of that holy Man. And then something happened. Who knows what peculiar reversal of allegiance, what faltering of devotion took place within Judas's heart. But now Judas had dirty money, blood money in his hands. When the awful realization struck, he went out alone, climbed up to the strong limb of a tree, tied a rope around his neck, and attaching the rope to the limb he let go. That was the end of a once- inspired disciple. It was Friday—"Good Friday" they call it! What's good about it?

Faltering Disciples

Peter, the rock upon whom Christ was to build his church—poor Peter! He had followed Jesus—at a distance, of course—to the clandestine meeting place of the Sanhedrin, where he stood just inside the door, hoping not to be noticed as he watched. He was asked three times whether he was a follower of the Nazarene. Each time he denied it. And the last time—he had failed to see that Christ was now being led out, indeed going right past him—the last time, Jesus overheard his denial. Peter had cursed: "Damn it, I've told you twice I don't know who this man is!" The cock crowed. Christ's searching, hurt eyes looked upon him. Then Peter went out—those eyes following him wherever he went; Peter went out and wept bitterly. It was Friday—"Good Friday" they call it. What's good about it?

Then occurred the second mockery of justice, be- fore Pilate. It was midmorning. Pilate appeared on the steps of the Praetorium. And Jesus, led by the representatives of the Sanhedrin, was shoved before the Roman governor. The angry mob, now so stirred they didn't care about justice and fair play, pressed in, eager for the kill. "What accusation do you bring against this man?" asked Pilate. "He is an evil doer!" come the reply. "Well, take him yourselves; judge him by your own law!" "But," cried the Jews, "we do not have the authority to execute a man!" So Pilate began the hectic proceedings. He took Jesus inside the Praetorium and interrogated him. Pilate had heard, apparently, that Jesus claimed to be some sort of king. "Are you the king of the Jews?" "My kingship is not of this world," replied our Lord, "otherwise my servants would fight." So Pilate took him out and, standing before the in- censed mob, shouted to make himself heard, "I find no crime in this man!" It was true. It was just. But the people had been aroused, and this did not sat- isfy them. Justice or no, they wanted the Nazarene

dead! "That is the only way to handle the likes of him!" On and on it went, until finally someone shouted words that filled Pilate with horror: "If you release him, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king, sets himself against Caesar." It did not matter that the mob of Jews cared nothing about Caesar. You see, they attacked the loyalty of Pilate, and he was afraid. Of course, there was nothing to it, but Pilate was afraid. And afraid, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified.

'It Is Finished'

Trumped-up charges, not a shred of legitimate evidence, not a suggestion of fair play! Just panic and fear, and a people—the nation of Israel, until then clearly the people of God—took upon itself the blood and guilt of destroying a good Man! Off to the hill of a Skull—how perfectly grotesquely named!—off to the hill of a Skull, Calvary, they went. It was Friday, just before noon. "Good Friday" they call it! But what's good about it?

For three long hours he hung there. I could never have stood it. The indecency, the cruelty, the utter stupidity of men was the spectacle there. They reeled with delight, and all the while Jesus—the cold nails tearing at his flesh and the marrow of his bones, his body throbbing with pain—all the while Jesus was up there, forgiving them! At the third hour, just about now, our Savior cried out, "Father, Father, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And they say the whole world grew suddenly dark, the winds blew with wild, angry fury—as though the gates of God's heaven had opened to admit its own Son, and the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. It was over. He was gone. Nothing to do now but spear his body to be sure, to be quite sure, he was dead. Nothing to do now. Nothing to do but yank out the nails, and take him away to a tomb. It was Friday, three o'clock in the afternoon. "Good Friday" they call it! Yes, but what, in God's name, was good about it?

A Backward Look

At first glance it is hard to see anything good in that day. At first glance it was ghastly, sheer horror, anything but good. Christians, however, have had more than that first look. Christians have looked back toward Calvary again and again. And each time, through their tears, they have discerned there something which meant light, not darkness, something which meant the mercy of God. Christians have looked back toward Calvary again and again, and each time they have seen that that Friday, in a deeper, truer sense, was good. Now what's good about it?

Well, it was good in this sense: It was good in that it forced men to see, at last, the depth and variety of human sin. There was no mistaking it now, no evading it, no talking it away, for there it pranced. Set indelibly upon the minds of men is the memory of what was done to the noblest Man who ever lived. And why was it done? For some it was stupidity. For others it was greed. For still more it was the will to keep their power. But for most it was indifferenece to the fate of another man. What did it matter that one man was mistreated, unjustly accused and condemned, indeed unjustly crucified? Now, if that dreadful day can make us understand that we are sinners, then it was good.

It was good in another sense: it was good in that it enabled men to see, in the most convincing manner, the magnitude of divine love. "Herein is love," wrote one of those early Christians, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son . . ." When Christ's heart bled, it was God's heart bleeding. When Christ forgave us, God forgave us. "On the green hill for away they raised a cross," says James Stewart in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, "but the real cross was in heaven, in the Father-heart of the Eternal." Now, if that dreadful day can make us understand how much God loves us and is willing to suffer for us, so that we will respond to him, then it was good.

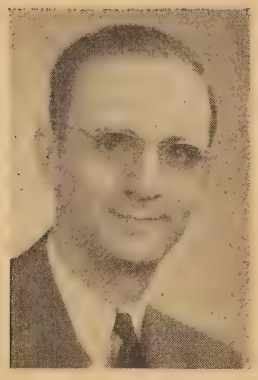
And it was good in this third sense: it was good in that it meant the releasing of new power in the world, the conquering power of God against all that is evil. Across the sky beyond the cross, we can see these words: "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In the play *The Terrible Meek*, the captain speaks to Mary at the foot of the cross just after Jesus died. To the mother of our Lord he says, "Something has happened up here on this hill today to shake all our kingdoms of blood and fear to the dust." Friends, if that dreadful day means that the power of God has been communicated to Christian men and women, then it was good.

Supreme Sacrifice

The price paid was great. Seen from the point of view of what it cost Jesus, what it cost God, Good Friday remains a dreadful day. But it was not a day poorly spent. Instead, it was a day when for the good of mankind—there it is, for the *good of mankind*—God endured supreme sacrifice. That is why we call it Good Friday. That is why Christian voices have sung ever again:

> In the Cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime.
>
> When the sun of bliss is beaming
> Light and love upon my way,
> From the Cross the radiance streaming
> Adds more luster to the day.

It was Good Friday. It *is* Good Friday, provided men lift their eyes toward Him. Provided men behold that cross, that dearest Form. Provided men yield to its disclosure of human sin, of divine love, of conquering power for the cause of justice and truth. Do you see, then, why it is so urgent that we tell others about our Lord, what he endured for us, what love supernal, what love eternal flows through him on the cross? It is Good Friday, provided men know what happened that day. It is Good Friday provided men can reply with penitence and gratitude: "Yea, I was there when they crucified my Lord."



Reversed Pharisaism

By Frederick H. Haag

Luke 18:8-14.

LAST Sunday we were favored with a very beautiful solo—Vandewater's musical setting of the well-known parable of the Pharisee and the publican. But during the singing of that solo, as I listened to the words, new meaning became apparent. So the sermon for today was, in a sense, cut out for me by the singing of that solo last Sunday.

First let me quickly repeat the Parable as Jesus gave it:

> Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Our purpose this morning is to raise certain questions about Pharisees, ancient and modern.

Now look briefly at this ancient Pharisee. Jesus said that he went up into the temple to pray. But instead of a prayer, he offers a self-gratified recital of his own piety. Instead of exalting God, he makes a display of himself. Instead of honoring God he indulges in self-flattery—blatant self-praise. Instead of addressing God, he audibly pays himself some handsome compliments, perhaps hoping that those near by will find out what a good man he really is. Instead of God "high and lifted up in the temple," the self, the "I" of the Pharisee, struts with a distinct sense of superiority. "The 'I' repeats itself like a hurdy-gurdy"—*I* fast, *I* give, *I* get.

One ought to add here that since the Pharisee prayed for nothing, he received nothing. Actually he speaks *with* himself and not *to* God, so his is no true prayer.

Having said that much about the parable as it stands in the gospel record, I wonder whether Jesus would give the parable in the same form were he to walk among us today. No doubt the answer is Yes, and yet I believe he might put alongside this parable two others—at least two variant readings of this one.

I

I think Jesus would have today's Pharisee say something like this: "O God, I thank Thee that I am worse than other men. I can drink more liquor than most. I've played faster and looser with more women than any man I know. Why, I'm even more crooked than that gangster over there."

You see, in our generation, many people have put the "reverse English" on the hypocrisy of the Pharisee. The ancient Pharisee put on the appearance of goodness—and there are still many of this type among us today. But the generation that has grown up since World War I is scared to death of being accused of being goody-goody. All too many in our generation try to appear worse than they actually are. It becomes something of a mark of distinction to be accused of the grosser sins.

I think this has some relevance—in part at least—to delinquency today. Did you ever sit in a booth at a hamburger shop and listen to the conversation of a group of teen-agers in the next booth? You needn't eavesdrop, for they make it loud enough for you to hear easily. It sounds like a game of "can you top this" in reverse. Our young fry today want others to believe that they have really played the field. And I'm convinced that some young people have got into mischief simply because they did not want to be outdone by anyone in their crowd. They want to be the toughest sinner in the gang.

II

So I think Jesus would give this parable another twist today. I think he would say something like this: "O God, I thank thee that *I am like* other men. I have the same interests. I think and say what others think and say. I belong to the same clubs. I even belong to the same church as my crowd."

The ancient Pharisee was thankful that he was *not* like other men; the modern Pharisee is thankful that he *is* like his fellows.

Have you ever stopped to analyze human nature today? Strange, isn't it? We stand at the end of a production line in an appliance factory and in an eight-hour shift see several hundred ranges or refrigerators come off the line, each exactly like the other. We often hear folk bemoan the sameness of the things we make with our machines. We complain of the monotony of the assembly line.

But each of us is born into the world a different individual—in looks, in size, perhaps even in abilities, and we scarcely get started at the business of growing up when we try to conform. One would think that unconformity was the Number One Sin today.

Who ever heard of a teen-age girl *not* wearing bobby socks? Or a teen-age boy *not* wearing blue jeans? Who would dare to be so queer as not to

wear them? And the older we become, the more we try to conform. We have come a long, long way since that day, not so long ago, when it was smart to be known as a rugged individualist.

The ancient Pharisee was exclusive. He kept himself aloof from the crowd. The modern Pharisee is inclusive in a monotonous sort of way. He loses himself—one might almost say he seeks anonymity—in the crowd. But both ancient and modern Pharisee are alike in one respect, they both seek respectability and that usually means nothing more than the approval of the crowd.

The ancient Pharisee suffered from a superiority complex—he thought himself better than other men. The modern Pharisee suffers from what we might call the "regular guy complex." He wants to be thought "regular" in the eyes of the popular crowd.

The ancient Pharisee boasted that he was more scrupulous in his religiosity. His religious superiority was attested by his careful observance of ceremonies, by the proprieties and punctualities with which he discharged his religious obligations. But the modern Pharisee is thankful that he has no sharp peculiarities—especially Christian peculiarities—that might set him off from the "regular" folk to whom religion is a minor concern.

Jesus did not tell us what happened to the ancient Pharisee. He suggested that he was not justified before God, but as to what happened to him in his relationship with other men, we are left to conjecture.

But we know what happens to the modern Pharisee. He slowly dies. His personality, one of the most distinctive gifts God bestows upon him, somehow dies as he pours himself into the mold of social conformity. Social pressure is too much for him and he succumbs to and is absorbed in the mass.

We complain about communism and how the individual loses his identity in the cause of the state, becoming merely a cog in the machine or a number on the party roster. But consciously or unconsciously, in our great concern to conform, we have created the same kind of impersonal society that one would find in Russia today. We have created caste systems of our own making.

III

There are a number of factors that contribute to this reverse pharisaism of our time. Time will only permit mentioning several without elaboration. (1) Fear has been a major contributing factor. We're actually afraid to be ourselves, to think what we please and say what we think. We must think and act like all our fellows or the Un-American Activities Committee may get us—the American version of the storm trooper may knock at our door if we deviate. (2) The fact that so many in our time have had to spend several years in uniform has tended to produce among us a kind of uniformity (no play on words intended). (3) Another factor lies in the belief of many people that to conform is a type of security. Conform to the crowd and you will be accepted; be accepted and you will get your share of this world's goods—so runs the reasoning (4) And we must include the constant pressure to conform to which all of us are constantly subjected.

All this means that we are living in a society which is becoming more humdrum. We are heading toward that kind of social life which might be symbolized by that musical composition entitled "The Monotone." Perhaps you have heard it. The solo instrument plays the same note all through the piece. Only the accompaniment varies. Our lives are tending toward the monotone, with only our environment playing different notes about us—sometimes tragic, sometimes gay—while we go our own monotonous way.

I think it is a commentary on our times that "the" color for clothes, and "the" color for home decorations this season we are told is gray—gray which is neither black nor white, so characteristic of our lives which are neither really positive nor negative, only a kind of vague neutrality; neither hot nor cold, only a nauseating Laodicean lukewarmness; neither great nor insignificant, just mediocre.

We seem content today to follow the leader, but we don't choose our leaders with any real discrimination—any old Davy Crockett will do. We are satisfied if we can "keep up with the Joneses." We are happy so long as we are not thought to be different—at least not *too* different.

We have heard a lot of political eyewash about this being the age of the common man. I think it would be more true to characterize the times in which we live as the age of the commonplace man.

IV

Now this has a number of sad results, and again we have time merely to mention them.

For the sake of brevity, let me first quote a few sentences from Dr. Halford Luccock. He says: "The great blessings to mankind and the great advances of history have been brought by people who were out of step with the majority of their time. In the words of Thoreau, they 'heard a different drummer.' They said: 'We must obey God rather than man.' Jesus put it clearly: 'What do you *more* than others?' "

Think how different the history of the world if Abraham had been content to live on in Haran as his forebears had done. Christopher Columbus determined to find a passage to the East by going west. Suppose he had listened to those who said: "We never did it that way before." Suppose Thomas Edison had continued to conform by lighting his miserable coal oil lamp—how different would be our world today.

In the second place, as I have already suggested, we seldom aspire to conform to a higher level of life. We are apt to maintain the status quo, or more probably, seek a lower level. That means that instead of spiraling upward we are tobogganing downward. We may be building "more stately mansions" for our bodies—because everyone else is doing it—but that does not mean that we are thereby automatically building more stately mansions for our souls.

A third sad result lies in the fact that our

urches are almost strictly stratified. That means at the people of any given congregation are about a kind. They fall pretty generally into a certain come bracket. To be sure there are those nearer he bracket than the other, but there is not too uch difference. They are of the same race. They ve nearly the same cultural backgrounds. And t anyone from what *we* like to think a lower strata re to invade our domain and they get a "deep eeze treatment" that will put them in their place r time immemorial. Our churches are less than ey might be simply because our mania to conrm has found its way even into our Christian llowship.

And surely we don't have to stretch the point see this type of pharisaism eventuating in dequency. The dullness of our self-regimented soety, the pressure to conform—these are problems at face young and old alike. The failure on the art of young people to adjust to these pressures, any desire to escape the regimentation, is likely bring that young person to cross purposes with ciety, and that, very simply, is delinquency.

V

Well, how about us? Do you and I have the urage to stand out *above* the crowd? Are we illing to champion a right and worthy cause even ough it is unpopular to do so? Are we willing to e committed Christians even if we are scorned, diculed, laughed at for not being "regular guys"? People who can answer those questions affirmavely are the ones who can make this a better orld. They are our hope for tomorrow.

We said at the outset that we were only conerned with the Pharisee. But perhaps one squint t the publican will help, for we will never find our hristian pattern in either ancient or modern harisaism. Remember the publican's prayer: "O od, be merciful to me a sinner." Then let's add: But, O God, in spite of my sins, give me courage nd strength to rise above my surroundings and bove *myself* to become more like my Savior and y Lord. O God, if I must conform, help me to onform to Thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Secret Springs

THERE is a special little bit of land in this world which has for me very precious memories. It overs an area of about eighty miles south of the English-Scottish border. There you can walk over he ruins of Hadrian's wall, once the limit of the Roman empire in England. You can conjure up in your mind the tremendous events of those days when the power of Rome reached that very spot.

If you go round that district you will find very many old and ancient towers, some of them in complete ruins, others of them beautifully preserved almost as they were. If you ask why it is that some of them are in ruins and some are in good condition, you will be told this story. Several hundred years ago England and Scotland were at bitter enmity, and the English in Northumberland were constantly being attacked by the Scots, who carried away their cattle and stole their crops. Therefore the English built castles near the border to defend themselves. Some of those castles had secret springs that provided a constant flow of water. Other castles had to receive their water supply through a pipe from a well many hundreds of yards away. The Scottish invaders were astute enough to know what to do—they would cut the pipe, then sit around the fortress and wait until the people inside died of starvation and thirst. But those who had a secret spring in their castles were invincible. So those castles stand until this day as living reminders of their invincibility. The other castles lie in ruins.

Every one of us has within him a fountain of life, but there are Christians who have not discovered it. Many are always going outside themselves: outside for amusement and ease, for luxury and indulgence, and, before long, their Christian life stands in utter ruins. But there are other children of God who have learned that the only way of possessing the land and holding on to the grace which God in Christ has given them is to draw continuously on the inner secret fountain of life. They can say with all their hearts that Jesus satisfies.—*Alan Redpath*, Victorious Christian Living *(Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell). Used by permission.*

The Cowards

AS hatred gathered over Thee
Like hot, heaped sand, they heard the call
Of mob to mob fly wall to wall,
The people's vote for agony;
They fled.

Leader of those-about-to-die,
They knew where Thou wouldst groan and hang,
Forgot the Meal, the hymn they sang,
Feared Thy red banner in the sky
Where bled

That leader, who was life and food
To them. They would not bear to think
Thee now accepting purple drink
Of suffering, bitter, gall-imbued,
Dark bread

Of dying. What was Thine they knew
Must, then, be theirs: pain's ghastly cup,
The nails, the being-lifted-up,
Hatred, and being so broken too—
And dead.

They feared and crept away and gave
Their coward's increment of flight
To their foes' victory—
yet light
Was in them, and their fear another grave
Whence it would rise with glory-shining head.

SIEGMUND A. E. BETZ.

We Can See Ourselves in th
Palm Sunday Thron

The People on the Road

By Ross M. Willis

Mark 11:8-10.

THE last trip to Jerusalem had been a difficult one. It was a journey that had led Jesus and his loyal disciples on a final teaching mission west across the region of Judea, through the city of Jericho and up to the summit of the Mount of Olives which virtually overlooked Bethphage, Bethany and Jerusalem. A colt had been secured from a neighboring village, probably Bethpage, and Jesus sat upon it.

Then, in this great moment atop the Mount of Olives, some three years of teaching were rapidly coming to a climax as a man, seated on a colt and surrounded by a crowd of shouting people, passed down a narrow mountain road and into the city of Jerusalem.

Then, as never before, a contrast of inner emotions loomed large. For the people who surrounded this man were so filled with joy and exuberance that frenzied emotion caused them to shout: "Hosanna! Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!" In an attempt to demonstrate their enthusiasm, some spread garments in the road while others spread branches they had cut from trees. So great was the happy celebration that, as they entered the city of Jerusalem, the people of that city were stirred to ask one another: "Who is this?" And the celebrating crowd joyously answered: "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee." Joy and excitement reigned supreme in the hearts of those who surrounded their Christ.

Contrasting Emotions

But quite in contrast, the man on the colt was filled with sadness and distress. Perhaps he was the only one in the company who realized the events that were ahead. Perhaps he, and he alone, realized his career of teaching would be culminated in the city he was now entering.

As the celebrating crowd entered Jerusalem a contrast of emotions was present. In the company was happiness and excitement, while in the man was sadness and distress.

This is the scene that hangs back of the stage on which the drama of the final week of Jesus' life was play. And in this drama we are so often tempted to look only at the man while we fail to notice the company of people who surrounded him. But the people who surrounded Jesus on the road down the Mount of Olives cannot be ignored. They are vitally important to our understanding of this final week. For although their king died, they lived on. At his death they suddenly became his church. And even today, people much like those people on the road remain his church. On this anniversary we would do well to look not only at our Christ but also at the people on the road.

There were three distinct types of individuals who either walked in that company with Jesus or lined the streets of Jerusalem as he made that final triumphant entry.

Men Full of Hate and Fear

First, there were those who hated and feared Jesus.

Since the beginning of his ministry, those who hated and feared Jesus had plagued him with cleverly worded questions designed to catch him off guard. Like poisonous vipers they sought every opportunity to strike at his ministry where they could do the most damage. Wherever Jesus appeared, they were there, hoping against hope that an occasion would arise for them to insert some vicious remark to confuse and embarrass him before the people who loved and followed him. Puppets of a religion that sought only to fulfill ancient laws, they were constantly questioning the orthodoxy of Jesus and his disciples. Always they were bobbing up just long enough to point out to the multitudes wherein Jesus and his followers had broken the law and thus were committing sin. Their constant quibblings over unimportant issues and outmoded customs had caused their religion to become sidetracked into an area of tradition and led Jesus to utter many times: "You have heard it said . . . but I say unto you."

Those people who hated and feared Jesus were the tradition-ridden scribes and Pharisees who could not see humanity for looking at the law. With them Jesus finally lost patience when he cried: "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, you are like whitewashed tombs, clean on the outside but dirty and vile within." In their own minds they may have had every right to attempt this campaign of belittlement designed to undermine Jesus of Nazareth, for their own religious position and respect was dependent upon whether the people of the nation followed Jesus or them. Should the people choose to follow Jesus, the religion they preached would fail and they would lose authority, jobs and face.

We could hardly doubt the fact that the scribes and Pharisees lined the streets of Jerusalem as

sus and his followers entered the city. For Jerusa-
n was the capital of their religion. It was head-
arters for those who hated and feared Jesus.
rely they were there to size up the situation and
final plans for attack. Those who hated and
ured Jesus were among the people on the road.

Others Misunderstood Jesus

And also among the people who lined the road
at led down the Mount of Olives and into the
y of Jerusalem must have been those individuals
o misunderstood Jesus, yet who were not willing
learn enough to clarify their misunderstanding.
These must have been among the most dangerous
, while they could not be banished for their ig-
rance, their refusal to learn or want to learn no
ubt confused others and, in a measure, the entire
th Jesus was attempting to teach. When they
imed Jesus as their King, their misunderstanding
used them to think only in terms of a monarchial
ng who would challenge them to take up arms in
bellion against the Roman forces. As far as a
fference between what Jesus taught and what was
ught by the scribes and Pharisees, they could see
tle, if any. Most of them were not even aware that
sus of Nazareth was introducing an entirely new
y of life. In their misunderstanding, their only
ncern was that this new King of the Jews would
ad them in a fight of personal freedom for selfish
asons. And because they misunderstood and re-
sed to help their misunderstanding, they com-
etely failed to see that Jesus wanted to become
ing of their souls, not king of their nation. They
issed the truth that he wanted to lead them in a
vival of their spirits, not a revival of their govern-
ents. And this misunderstanding of Jesus' true
tents and purposes was largely responsible for the
oss. Those who misunderstood Jesus and refused
clear up their misunderstanding were among the
eople on the road.

Loyal Followers

And too, among the people on the road could be
und those who actually and sincerely loved Jesus.
As a group they were small but loyal. Some had
llowed Jesus from the first call of early teaching
ays, while others had accepted his challenge as he
ter traveled and taught. Their love for him went
deep that they capitalized every opportunity
be near him. In sincere eagerness they struggled
hear every word that proceeded from his mouth.
hey were constantly attempting to enact his prin-
ples in their daily lives. They would travel miles
hear him and no price was too great a cost for
llowing him. Those who sincerely loved and fol-
wed Jesus were among the people on the road.
These were the people that composed the com-
any that surrounded Jesus; that shouted and sang
happy fashion; that spread their coats in his way;
hat lined the streets of the city as he entered Je-
usalem. Great were the festivities. High was the
ope.
But what happened?
Within a period of less than five days, those who
ated and feared Jesus had him crucified; those
who misunderstood and were not willing to learn were helpless in their ignorance; and those who actually and sincerely loved Jesus moved so slowly in the application and use of their faith that by the time they were ready to unite for action there was nothing left for them to do but stand and weep at the foot of the cross on which Jesus hung.

Such is the sad commentary concerning the people on the road that led to Jerusalem and the part their attitudes and lives played in this series of events between the first Palm Sunday and the first Easter. But even more distressing is the fact that this is only the first of a long series of dramatic events leading down to our present day in which the people on the road have had the same qualities and have acted in the same manner. In almost universal fashion, the people who line and have lined the road of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ, from the day he lived to the present hour, have exhibited the same characteristics as those who lined the road into Jerusalem over 1900 years ago.

Historical Prototypes

For always there have been those who would crucify Jesus through hate and fear. Seizing on the petty aspects of religion they seek to build a faith on a tiny set of principles, laws or rules that fit their personal fancy. Then they demand that others obey the principles that they as "protectors of the faith" have enacted. What they fail to realize is that the Church of Jesus Christ is great enough to protect itself. It does not need protectors; it needs stewards. Those who do not agree with them, they are bent on destroying, and thus they crucify Jesus through a hate and fear of others. Like the scribes and Pharisees, they fail to see humanity for looking at the law. And through this hate and fear of others they do more harm to the Christian faith than they do good.

And lining the road of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ have always been those who misunderstood him, yet who refused to do anything to clarify their misunderstanding. In their confusion they run hither and yon, not knowing what to do or whom to believe. The end result is that they become so confused they serve only to confuse others, or they completely lose interest in the Christian faith and do nothing at all. In their misunderstanding they do nothing constructive about Christ and his church. Never once do they build for the future of his Kingdom. Never can they see the great potentialities of his faith. Never do they allow his faith to make a solid impression on their lives.

Meditate for a moment on the history of the church. Try to catch an overall vision of it. See if you do not recognize that the people who classify themselves within the church, yet who hate and fear, or who misunderstand, have not done more profound damage to the Church of Jesus Christ than all the outside atheistic, agnostic and antagonistic forces history has produced!

And lining the road of the history of the Church of Jesus of Nazareth have always been those who love Jesus with sincerity and truth. Those individuals who worship him and who have dedicated their

lives and their possessions to his service. But like those who lined the streets of Jerusalem centuries ago, those who love Jesus often take so long to transform their love into actual service and dedication that those who hate and those who are confused have crucified the Christian principles before those who love him are ready to begin their work.

This is what we see when we look at the people on the road that led to Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday. We see charactristics that have portrayed the church from its inception. We see those who hate and fear. We see those who misunderstood and who are not willing to help their misunderstanding. We see those who actually love Jesus of Nazareth. But we also see the startling fact that the reason the Church of Jesus Christ has not transformed the world in 2,000 years, the reason the Kingdom of God has not been established, is that those who hate and fear Jesus, and those who are confused over the Christian principles, often have these principles crucified before those who love Christ are ready to begin their work.

What then can be done?

Those who labor in misunderstanding must dedicate themselves to a renewed attempt to understand. There is no excuse for misunderstanding Jesus. His teachings are more clear and simple th those of any other teacher who ever lived. But must at least try to understand them. We must least read what he has to say and attempt to u his principles in our daily lives. But we can never excused because we don't understand. For wh Jesus of Nazareth had to say cannot be misund stood.

A Challenge to Christians Today

And those who love Jesus must dedicate the selves not only to love, but also to serving him before it is too late. We must serve him now sacrifice the name Christian. We cannot wait f things to "work themselves out." Those early fo lowers who waited found themselves standing the foot of his cross.

The Church of Jesus Christ must either act o Christian principles or see them crucified. We w either stand by and watch those who hate and fea Jesus, or those who are confused, crucify Christ, we will ready ourselves to do the work of Chri now, through his church. To be a Christian, or no to be a Christian? This is the challenge of our da

We must remember on this anniversary above a that *we* are the people on the road!

Words to Live By

A Funeral Meditation by Gladstone L. Brown

The Methodist Church in Madison, Ohio

ONE of our weekly periodicals runs a column entitled "Words To Live By." In it, well-known people quote the words, the sayings, the maxims that have proved most beneficial and inspiring to their own lives. Some of them are rather superficial, but most are words of substance and meaning.

Man cannot live by bread alone. He must have words to live by. Of course, words in themselves mean nothing. It is rather the faith and trust and confidence that these words inspire. Words reveal where our faith is placed; they reveal what we hold to be important and meaningful in life.

A quotation that has proved inspiring and meaningful to many of us is found in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul says, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him." (8:28.) Here are words that we not only can live by; they are words we can die by, and that is the final test of any word.

Just examine this statement carefully for a moment. "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him." You notice that Paul does not say, "We think," or, "We hope." He says, "We know." It is something more than a conjecture, something more than a desirable end ardently hoped for. He is saying that it is a conviction of our hearts. Because of the kind of God we worship, the God so wonderfully revealed in Jesus Christ, we know that no lasting evil can befall believer in this life or in the next. There is no prom ise that we shall escape tribulation because we ar disciples of the Lord, but rather that all our ex periences, whether joyful or sorrowful—even deat itself—can be used by God for our eventual advan tage and good. This knowledge helps us to endure to last through the trying circumstances of life. Bu even more, it opens the door to God whereby he car take all the seemingly meaningless events of ou lives and write a story of immortal purpose an beauty.

As someone has put it so well, He can take all the strands of living and weave them into a Pattern of Life. Much of the truth of this can be seen in the lives of those around us, even in our own lives.

But the whole story cannot be told, nor the completed picture seen, until we have experienced the transition from this life to the next. Then we shall see what wonders God can work with such unpromising material.

"In everything God works for good with those who love him." This is the essence of the gospel for man! It is a fitting sequel to John 3:16, "For God so loved the world . . ." Hopelessness is replaced by trust, despair by joy, and death by Life.

These, my friends, are not only words to live by; they are words to die by.

The Robe

By Wayne Dehoney

entral Park Baptist, Birmingham, Ala.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him. Matt. 27:28.

THAT "clothes *make* the man" is a shallow observation. Clothes *reveal* the man. Even the clothes that Jesus wore revealed every facet of his eternal nature and destiny. Before the robed piety of the Sanhedrin, Annas and Caiaphas, he stood, dressed in peasant homespun and simple humility, dramatizing the contrast between the elaborate legalism of institutionalized Judaism and the new gospel of simple grace. His seamless robe and calm silence, bespeaking an undivided heart in fellowship with God, were in contrast to the frantic motions of regal-robed Pilate as he vainly tried to wash from his hands the sticky feelings of guilt and frustration. Even the brass-bedecked legionnaires felt the condemnation of force and militarism in the modest dress of the Galilean prisoner, and so they "stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him."

Robes of Our Fashioning

But the guards of Pilate's court are not the only ones who have forced Christ to wear a robe of their own making. A philosopher said, "Of course, I accept Jesus, the Semite. He was the world's greatest ethical teacher. He was a greater thinker than Socrates, a greater mystic than Buddha, and a greater student of ethics than Confucius. He was the greatest of men, but only a man." Said a labor leader, "Jesus was the first spokesman for the labor movement. Remember, he was a carpenter, a master craftsman of Galilee." Said a certain educator, "Yes, Jesus was our greatest teacher." And on and on, men pedestal him in robes of their own fashioning.

Certainly Jesus was the greatest philosopher that ever lived. He was a carpenter, and a good one, I am sure. He was a master teacher. His life and teachings have meant more to the cause of labor, education, philosophy and social ethics than those of any other man. But you blaspheme him when you strip from his shoulders the robes of the Son of God and put on him the robes of a man, regardless of how complimentary these human robes may be. It is a repetition of the blasphemy of Pilate's court to rig him in robes of our own fashioning and worship him in titles of our own fabrication.

There are four robes that Jesus chose to wear. They are his, not ours.

The White Robe

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was transfigured and "his garment ... came glistening, intensely white."

That white robe symbolizes Jes... perfect life. He was found in fash... as a man, lived in the frame of ... flesh and yet was sinless, spotless, ... unique contrast to our soiled lives. ... is the answer to the moral man w... says with pride, "My life is clean, a... I am far better than the hypocrite ... side the church." Certainly any of ... can find others to whom we can po... with self-righteous pride and say, ... am cleaner and better." But when ... look to Jesus Christ we cry out, "... our righteous deeds are like a pollut... garment . . . I am a man of unclean li... . . . 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ... David Livingstone told of finding ... Africa men who never knew they we... black until they saw a white man. A... so it is with us. The depth of the dar... ness within us becomes clear on... when the brightness of Christ has h... gun to penetrate.

The Red Robe

Eight hundred years before Chri... stood in a white robe on the Mount ... Transfiguration, Isaiah saw a messia... on the horizon. Suddenly he crie... "Why is thy apparel red, and thy ga... ments like his that treads in the win... press?" Red as wine? The color ... blood? Why the Messiah robed i... crimson? Even those who walked wit... him during the days of his flesh did no... understand the meaning of the re... robe. Jesus repeatedly told them tha... his was the way of the crucified an... not the way of a military conqueror... that there would be no earthly throne... no embroidered garment of royalty... but only a red, bloodstained robe at th... foot of a cross. It was only after Cal... vary that men began to understand th... red robe.

Bloodstained soil and crimson bar... in a flag are familiar symbols of th... vicarious substitutions and sacrifice... men make for their fellows. In reli... gious worship, blood has always sym... bolized a life given to God in sacrifice... and substitution for sin. Thus Abe... brought a sacrifice of blood to signify... his own life given in penance for sin... It was one lamb, slain for one man, as... a propitiation for sin.

Then came a broadening revelation... In Egypt, on that awful night when... the black angel of death rode by every... home in the land to claim the first-... born son, blood spread on the doorpost... became a sign of deliverance to the... family within. One lamb for a family.

In the days of the Hebrew monarchy... the high priest stood before the people... and sacrificed a lamb for the sins of a... nation, and took the blood into the... Holy of Holies before God. One lamb... for a nation.

Finally rugged John pointed to Jesus... as he walked beside the Jordan and... declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God,... who takes away the sin of the world!" ... One Lamb for the whole *world!*

In Stroudsburg, Pa., in the national... cemetery, is a tombstone bearing the... epitaph, "Abraham Lincoln's substi-...

te." It is on the grave of a soldier osen by Lincoln himself, as part of nationwide movement to emphasize e personal aspects of the war, and ferred to by the President as the man 10 took his place on the firing line. ist so, as we stand before the cross, e realize that the sign "King of the ws" should read, "Jesus Christ, my bstitute." He stood in the gap and ed for me.

The Black Robe

In John's Revelation, we find Jesus st in an entirely different role than at of the spotless example and the carious substitute. He is dressed in a lack robe as the eternal judge before hom all the world must stand in dgment.

A woman facing a lawsuit intended ask a lawyer to defend her. But she ocrastinated. One day she was called to court. She went immediately to er friend. "Sir," she said, "I have tended to ask you to defend me, but put it off. Will you now stand in my half at court?" But the lawyer answered, "You have waited too long. I ave been appointed judge and therere cannot defend you. Instead, I must t on the bench to judge you." Today esus offers to stand in your behalf, aying, "The record is true; this one a sinner. But I have paid for his sins n the cross and have imputed my ghteousness unto him." Today he ould be your advocate before the dge. But if you neglect to seek him nd refuse to claim him in faith, you ay awaken to find that this One who ow offers to be your Advocate has beome your Judge.

The Royal Robe

But let us return again to Pilate's rison hall. The white-robed, redobed, black-robed Savior is now ressed in the purple robe of royalty. or two hours he wears this royal robe hile the guards bow before him in ock adoration, saying, "Yes, my ord. No, my Lord. Hail, my Lord." When the two hours are gone, they trip him of this royal robe and take im out to crucify him. How contemorary! For two hours a week we permit him to wear the royal robe. He is xalted in the sanctuary. We sing our ymns, say our prayers and call him King. And then we say our polite benediction and go our way. We leave him rucified by our indifference as we ravel our week-day round without im.

N. B.

WHAT a gulf between *im*pression and *ex*pression! That's ur ironic fate—to have Shakespearan feelings and (unless by some bilon to one chance we happen to *be* hakespeare) to talk about them like utomobile salesmen or teen-agers or college professors. We practice alchemy in reverse—touch gold and it turns into lead; touch the pure lyrics of experience, and they turn into the verbal equivalents of tripe and hogwash."—*Aldous Huxley,* The Genius and the Goddess *(New York: Harper, 1955).**

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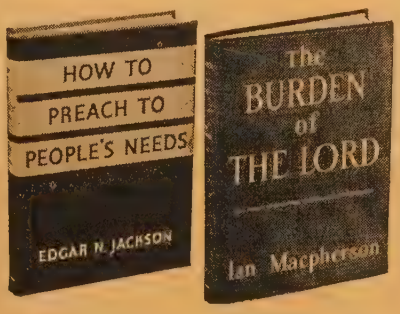

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Ensl

Now Shalt Thou Meditate!

LAST month I ventured a few words on that ticklish subject, the Service of Worship, and confessed that were the responsive reading to go into retirement—at least in its more obnoxious forms—I would not sorrow as one without hope. The opinions expressed were solely my own, but the expression of them was in no small part due to several letters from ministers in widely separated areas asking me to devote a column to that subject which was obviously troubling them too. In the concluding paragraph I mentioned another item increasingly common on ecclesiastical menus in these latter days, an item to which I planned to devote a few more words at a more convenient season. The season has now arrived; the item may be styled Meditation by Stop Watch or Worship in Vacuo.

I am not referring to the moment between the invitation to prayer and the pulpit prayer itself. Both minister and congregation may with profit find this instant of quiet both natural and valuable. Nor am I critical of the practice of having a moment of quiet during which the organ softly plays a stanza of one of the more devotional, tuneful and universally familiar hymns. And I cannot overstress the value and loveliness added to the communion service by thoughtfully chosen hymns, played quietly while the deacons are serving the congregation as they do in churches where I am most at home. In the regular morning service a not dissimilar interlude between the reading of the lesson and the prayer —if so the order is arranged—appears to me distinctly in place. Some of my friends prefer to have it as the immediate prelude to the sermon. I am hesitant to criticize this timing, for I have no question that many find it of real value. In my own service I do not care for it. I much prefer a congregational hymn as the prelude to the sermon.

However, all of this, which seems to me not only proper but—I repeat the adjective without apology—lovely, is a far step from the veritable epidemic of periods of meditation which I have encountered. Actually in one service there were no less than five such items. The first followed without hiatus—and, so far as I was concerned, without rhyme or reason—the organ prelude. The others were interlaced throughout as interims of break, between, or so it seemed to me, every two element readings, prayer, hymns—of the ve sparse and barren service. And all them were lengthy, gaunt and witho benefit of music.

To me the service was a monstrosi These sudden and empty moments not encourage meditation. Instead th simply made me restless and, from t all-too-clear rustle from other pews judged I was not a solitary Philisti As one man remarked after the servi was over: "By the end of the seco period I had not only exhausted r ability to meditate for a week but h run up a sizable deficit."

This may have been an extreme ca but from my conversation with a go many ministers, especially young men, I am sure the habit is growin There seems to be a feeling that ma of the elements in the conventional fr service are antiquated and unreal, th they simply evidence the point of t old charge that we expect to gain t attention of the Almighty by our mu speaking and other antics.

Undoubtedly ours is an age with very rapid tempo; undoubtedly all us could, and can, profit from an occ sional moment of quiet. But is the Su day morning service the place for th in such sizable doses? Frankly, I dou it. Meetinghouses whose doors star open through the week and which pr vide an opportunity for such moment when the individual feels himself the need of them, perform a servi vastly greater than many pruden minded trustees responsible for th physical upkeep will concede.

I have no desire for a Sunday sert ice where Bustle and Blare are th twin producers. A little inconspicuou leeway between an Amen and the ne item is more than possible; it will see self-evident to the man who knows h job and who is not utterly devoid that one indispensable ingredient, con secrated common sense. But this is long step from these increasingly fr quent pauses wherein you are suppose suddenly to evolve holy thoughts an pious aspirations. Perhaps some ca do it. For me they fail utterly, and find my mind turning back to the un certainties and perplexities it is sup posed for the moment to forget. To m this sort of thing is utterly artificia I cannot "steal awhile away" simpl because some ecclesiastical enginee sees fit to blow his whistle.

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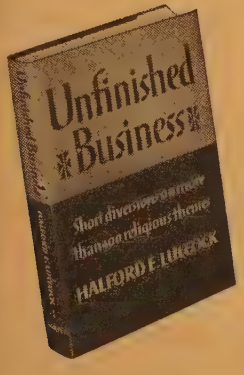

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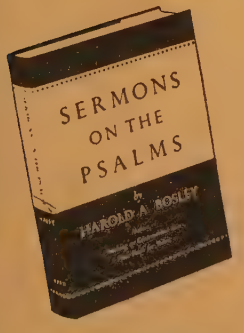

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A DIARY OF READINGS. *By John Baillie. Scribners, $2.50.* I am usually unimpressed by books that offer a page a day for 365 days, but this one is a refreshing exception. Dr. Baillie, famous already for his *Diary of Private Prayer,* has put us further in his debt by this sensitive and varied selection of short devotional masterpieces.

HENTZ: OF THINGS NOT SEEN. *By Harriet Hentz Houser. Macmillan, $3.50.* Until that May morning in 1951 when her son, Hentz, was critically injured from a dive into shallow water, Mrs. Houser was perhaps an "ordinary Christian." She is no longer. This account of the rises and falls of faith, and its towering affirmatives, is as memorable as any human interest story in a very long time.

MAKING RELIGION REAL. *By Nels F. S. Ferré. Harper, $2.00.* The author, one of the most original of living theologians, here turns to the question of how one can change religion from theory into a personal reality. His chapters on thinking, reading, friendship, suffering, etc., are replete with practical suggestions.

NEARER TO HEAVEN. *By Frank Baker. Westminster, $3.50.* A sensitive novel about a minister who finds he has only one more year to live, and the use he makes of that year.

THE NEW BEING. *By Paul Tillich. Scribners, $2.75.* Very difficult reading in his weightier books, Dr. Tillich is not at all hard going in this collection of sermons. They have clarity and are alive with joy and a sense of the power that comes from "the new being."

THE SECRET OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER. *By Helen Smith Shoemaker. Revell, $2.00.* An active organizer of prayer cells here shares her wealth of experience in the life of prayer. The approach is simple and practical, and the explanations are clear enough for the rankest beginner.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. *By Evelyn Underhill. Harper, $1.75.* On my shelf of modern devotional classics, this takes its place alongside Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion.* I could not p it greater honor.

UNCOMMON PRAYERS. Collected *Cecil Hunt. American edition arrang by John Wallace Suter. Seabury, $3.5* An extremely varied and beautiful co lection of prayers, including many e cellent poems. Much of the material difficult to find elsewhere; nearly all

Included in List

Reviewed earlier in The Pulpit ar also included in the list by Dr. Wals were the following:

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO YOU. *B Robert McAfee Brown. Westminste $3.00.*

ENCOUNTER WITH REVOLUTION. *B M. Richard Shaull. Association Pres $2.50.*

THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY OF MAN *By David E. Roberts. Oxford, $3.00.*

INTERPRETING PAUL'S GOSPEL. *B Archibald M. Hunter. Westminste $2.50.*

THE LEGEND OF THE BAAL-SHEM. *B Martin Buber, translated from the Ger man by Maurice Friedman. Harper $3.00.*

REDISCOVERING PRAYER. *By John L Casteel. Association Press, $3.50.*

THE RENEWAL OF MAN: A TWENTI ETH CENTURY ESSAY ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. *By Alexander Miller Doubleday, $2.95.*

THE STRANGENESS OF THE CHURCH *By Daniel Jenkins. Doubleday, $2.95*

THOUGHTS: AN APOLOGY FOR CHRIS TIANITY. *By Blaise Pascal, edited with an introduction by Thomas S. Kepler World, $1.50.*

ULTIMATE QUESTIONS. *By Nathanie Micklem. Abingdon, $2.00.*

WALKING IN THE LIGHT. By Marjorie *Wilkinson. Abingdon, $1.00.*

WE LIVE BY FAITH. By Ruby Lornell. *Muhlenberg, $2.00.*

WHEN GOD WAS MAN. By J. B. *Phillips. Abingdon, $1.00.*

is well suited to the varied needs of ıe devotional life.

THE WORLD OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER: BOOK OF PHOTOGRAPHS. *By Erica nderson, with text and captions by ugene Exman. Harper, $5.00.* This is magnificent introduction to the great hristian who gave up fame and com-ɔrtable Europe in order to devote him-:lf to the natives of the Congo.

THE YOUNG CHURCH IN ACTION: A RANSLATION OF THE ACTS OF THE POSTLES. *By J. B. Phillips. Macmil-ın, $2.50.* This vigorous rendering into ıodern English brings alive that pe-iod when Christianity, against every ɔnceivable obstacle, set out to turn ıe ancient world upside down. As ɛadable as Dr. Phillips' earlier *Let-ɛrs to Young Churches.*

●

BEHOLD THE GLORY. *By Chad Walsh. 56 pages. Harper, $2.00.* Last, but far rom least, this new book by Chad Valsh himself. The Harper Book for ɹent 1956, this is a real departure for Dr. Walsh. Heretofore a discerning and ophisticated essayist and poet, in this ıook he is a kind of contemporary nystic. Not that his discernment or ophistication fail him: they are there n his analyses and in his very stylish tatement. But the subject, the material s mystical. He writes of a kind of louble vision by which in quite common ɔeople and places he "beholds the glory"—a glory which he identifies and ınderstands finally at the cross.

T.A.G.

Dialogia Biblica

By T. Didymus

Man: Nobody's going to order me ıround—but nobody! I'm going my ɔwn way.

[*Unhappy interval.*]

God: Will you build a boat if I tell ɔu a flood's coming?

Man: How do you know? . . . Well—'d be a fool not to play safe. [*150 days ater.*] Thanks. Here's an altar for you.

God: If I prosper you and yours, ınd promise to make the world happy hrough you, will you do what I say?

Man: Who are you to promise so ıuch? [*90-year-old woman bears a hild.*] Wow! . . . OK. It's a bargain.

God: Follow my orders and I'll res-ue you from slavery.

[*Rescue accomplished.*]

Man: You really are Somebody. It ɔays to listen to you.

God: Now I'm going to fix you up a ıomeland. But behave yourself! Above ll, be strictly loyal to me—and I mean *trictly!*

[*A period of indifferent successes.*]

Man: You're making it harder than thought.

God: Don't forget what we've been through together. The best is still ahead.

Man: Ouch! Be good inside, too—in my thoughts and attitudes and desires?

God: Yep—all day, all night.

Man: I gotta be perfect . . . I'm better and better . . . I'm righteous . . . Step aside for real religion, boy!

God: Child, child, see what your religion is doing to our friendship. Whom do you really believe in these days?

Man: Nobody can stop my crusade. I'll put away anyone who blocks our cause, God. Take this Bible-Quoter and His rebels, for instance . . . [*Good Friday.*] There! All for your glory, holy God.

[*Easter.*]

God: [*Very gently.*] Now see what you've done to me!

Man: Oh, no! It was you, Lord! And you let me go through with it. I guess I'm really no good at all, God.

God: Not precisely. But you get the general idea.

Man: You went through all this—for me? You loved me all the while anyway?

God: "Anyway" is right.

Man: [*Very slowly, in a new voice.*] Thank you. Thank you very much, God.

God: You're welcome, child.

Man: Just talk sounds kind of cheap, now. Seems as if I ought to do something.

God: You've been won over. Want to help win others to me?

Man: Seems only right. How?

God: Just love people—especially the tough kind who don't seem to want it.

Man: Love *them?* Where on earth does that kind of love come from?

God: It doesn't. It's a gift from me—my very best.

Man: Where do I get it?

God: Stick with my ashamed, thankful believers. I give it out there personally.

[*After some rude experiences.*]

Man: Doesn't always seem exactly to—uh—pay off, God.

God: Keep your eyes straight on me. And give me time.

[*More painful discoveries.*]

Man: That loving way doesn't always seem right—even possible—God. Sometimes you have to be rough, and get dirty.

God: Offer back to me what must be done, child. Offer it, humbly, down to the hour of your death.

Man: Here it is Lord. But it sure isn't worth what it should be.

God: I took care of that. Remember?

[*Time drags mightily.*]

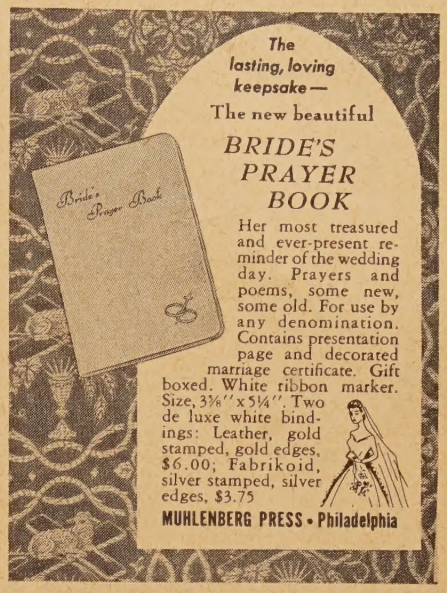
Man: This patience of yours with everything, God . . . How long? How long?

God: You trying to trade places with me again?

Man: Lord, increase my faith!

God: Quit worrying. Who's running things anyway?

[*Amen.*]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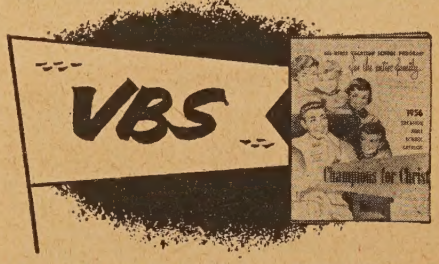

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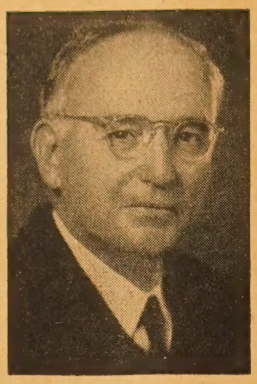

Ministry of Music

By Orva Lee Ic

Selecting Hymns

When they had sung a hymn, they went out. Matthew 26:30.

THIS is the record of the parting at the farewell meal Jesus had with the twelve. The meeting must have been a sanctifying experience to the disciples. Ever since da Vinci, it has not been difficult to picture the last supper: the men about the long table in groups of three; Judas with his hand clutching the sack of money has just spilled the salt, an ominous sign; Peter with a knife in his right hand where he will later this night hold his sword; John about to swoon at the very thought of a betrayal; the face of Christ framed in the center in a mastery of artistic subordination; and a maze of hands and arms uplifted in protest. Hearts had been stirred. Vows of loyalty made: "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you."

It was a good meeting. Many made their pledges of love and loyalty. They sang the closing hymns of praise and went out. It was a good way to go: "Singing makes the burden lighter. Singing drives the cares away."

"When they had sung a hymn, they went out." Now was their opportunity for heroism, for fortitude and fidelity. How did they go? One betrayed Jesus with a kiss that led to the tragedy of the cross. One denied him with cursing, swearing that he never knew him. During the crisis hour in the garden they fell asleep. After the execution they ran away like frightened sheep.

Religious Emotion

Most worshipers have had experiences like theirs. They have gone to wonderful meetings, listened to inspiring messages and joined in stirring hymns. They have sung hymns and gone out feeling bold enough to meet a lion and been frightened by a mouse, adventurous enough to brave the tempest and been drowned in a teacup.

Christians love to sing, and powerful are the hymns of the church in message and in melody. At worship services the people receive an inflation of sentiment and often it takes only a pin point of trouble to let them down. They sing a hymn and go out to face a demanding world, then fall out of paradise and come to earth with a thud that takes away their breath of religion.

Worshipers breathe in the atmosphere of religious emotion. They sing, "Were the whole realm of nature mine/That were a present far too small," and their giving is on such a small scale they should be embarrassed to have the amount made known. They sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and spend only a minute or two in daily devotions; "I Love to Tell the Story" and are fearful someone will find out they are Christians.

Christian Experience

Christianity is more than a beautiful song. It is a life to be lived. Christians must sing. Singing is the result of the true religious experience. It is well for the ministers to select carefully the hymns that build for strong Christian living. Hymns that overly stress the subjective results should be used with caution. If pulpit oratory may sweep people up into the clouds of emotion, how much more is this true of music. So often people sing a hymn and go out feeling the emotion is an end in itself. "I'm always so happy when we sing 'Sweet Hour of Prayer,'" they say. "It makes me cry!" When they are through singing, they are through. They substitute emotion for motion; because they have sung something, they imagine they have done something.

The right type of hymn carries one over from emotional immediacy into practical living. The hymn that gives only temporary inspiration is second-rate. The melody must be translated into harmonious action.

I should like to suggest here some methods of hymn selection for the worship hour, some principles to be considered when ministers make up their order of service. Ministers should be as careful in the selection of their hymns as they are in the preparation of their sermons.

Unifying Factor

The hymns should have their places in carrying through the message of the morning. The topical index should be carefully used. The minister who does this will find helpful suggestions. If it is Brotherhood Sunday, there are listed "O Thou Great Friend" by Theodore Parker and "O Brother Man" by Whittier. If the theme is Prayer, listed are "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire" by Montgomery and "Father Almighty, Bless Us with Thy Blessing."

The minister will also find how few hymns are listed for social service. Great hymns are yet to be written that correctly inspire Christian living for

ıe present world. Some day God will
et us to do more of his will "on earth
s it is in heaven" and then will come
harvest of new songs. Indeed, great
oems have already been written that
ave waited too long for their message
) be carried over into melody. Here
es a challenge to some ministers who
ave the talent of music. Perhaps here
s an idea for having a congregational
ymn contest that might stimulate in-
erest. Secondly, it should be recog-
ized that instead of always unifying
he singing with the sermon, hymns
ıay be used to create the worshipful
tmosphere, to bear the priestly func-
ion of lifting the worshipers up to
iod. The hymn thus becomes not a
art of the morning message but a part
f the worship: "God Himself Is with
Js," "Dear Lord and Father of Man-
ind." Indeed a sequence may be set
ıp so that the first hymn may be one
f adoration and praise; the second,
ne of confession and assurance of
orgiveness; and a third, one of conse-
ration. Such a sequence might include
'Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore
Him," as adoration; "Hear Us, Our
Father," as confession; and "Not in
Dumb Resignation," as consecration.

Tool of Spiritual Craft

Again, the careful minister may choose a hymn to balance out the service. The sermon may be on a doctrinal theme and he may wisely select one hymn that gives hope and courage. The sermon idea may be on stimulating action and may prophetically inveigh against some political practice or social menace. It may carry something disturbing or even distasteful to some who are present. Wishing all to feel they have been to worship, the minister may select a hymn to rest tired hearts already heavily laden with cares of the world. The strong meat of the sermon may be finished off with the sweetness of a devotional dessert.

The minister should feel obligated to teach his congregation new hymns. The best way to do this is to have the choir sing the hymn as an anthem before it is scheduled for congregational use. Not more than one unknown hymn should be used on any given Sunday.

Most worshipers prefer the old songs. Sometimes when a new hymn is used, the spirit of passive resistance is obviously present; the worshipers may go home happier if a good, warm, well-known hymn is used to close the service.

The hymn should be as carefully selected as the sermon theme. It is a tool of spiritual craft. It requires prayerful guidance. We must have care that the hymn builds on after the service is closed; that the message of it is made flesh in the daily living; that worshipers do not merely sing a hymn and go out, some to forget, some to deny or to betray.

Pulpit Calendar

Mar. 4—3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 11—4th Sunday in Lent. One Great Hour of Sharing.
Mar. 18—Passion Sunday.
Mar. 25—The Annunciation.
Mar. 25—Palm Sunday.
Mar. 25-31—Holy Week.
Mar. 29—Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 30—Good Friday.
Apr. 1—Easter.
Apr. 8—1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 15—Christian College Day.
Apr. 22—3rd Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 29—4th Sunday after Easter.
May 6—Rural Life Sunday.
May 6-13—National Family Week.
May 10—Ascension Day.
May 13—Festival of the Christian Home (Mother's Day).
May 20—Whitsunday (Pentecost).
May 27—Trinity Sunday.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

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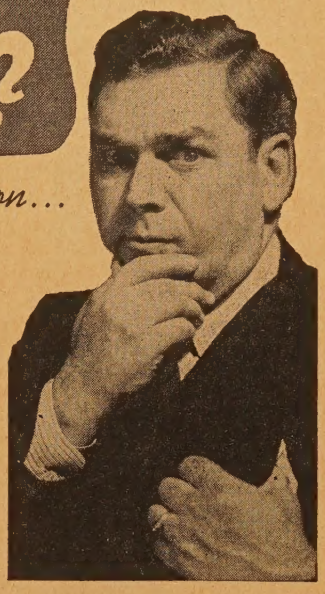

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